Robert Morgan • Faith & Medicine • The Jews of Beckley, W.Va. • Deciphering Baptists

NOW & THEN

THE APPALACHIAN MAGAZINE

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Religion in Appalachia

Articles, Essays, Fiction, Poetry, and Reviews

Adam Stands in His Garden

The point is that it's his garden –
part of his ongoing argument with God's capricious boundaries.
Mornings from our window I see him there
across the yard, framed by sunflowers' bent and brown-streaked, yellow heads.
Earthbound even at seven feet,
they tower over him. Bean trellis dwarfs him, twisted
with the heavy green of vines,
and the tomatoes, shoulder high, seem to writhe in their cages,
their limbs hung full of fruit still green.

Didn't we escape from such a place?
Now all he does is struggle to create a place as good as the one
he never mentions being thrown out of.
Daylight sends us off our separate sides of the night bed,
drives us to our different labors,
always just a little out of tune – part of broken music
that drives the world.
All I know is the garden focuses him like a mother's eyes hold
the nursing newborn.

He suckles there, dripping
sweat, the wages of his unforgotten sin of separateness.
He burrows himself back
to earth, the body from which he was lifted whole and inert
before the air first entered him.
And for these few moments of the morning, new-created,
when I stop my morning work
at our window by the bed I make, and watch him
standing in the garden,
he seems a part of it, at peace with whatever mars
the vision that begot it.

At night, he comes to me
as to another soil and sea. He tastes the old, remembered salt
of the world's first waters
and tends me, willful as himself, as full of desire
and as impossible to join.

— Leatha Kendrick

Leatha Kendrick lives on a small farm on the north side of a hill in East Point, Ky. She tends her garden and writes poems, essays, and book reviews. Kendrick is associate editor of Wind *and coordinator of education outreach for the Jenny Wiley Theatre.*

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"Appalachia is one of the most religiously diverse areas of America."
— Howard Dorgan

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The Gift of Tolerance

My parents had a "mixed" marriage. My mother is Roman Catholic, and my Scotch-Irish father came from generations of Presbyterians. Back when they wed just after World War II, the Catholic Church recognized such a marriage as valid — but only just.

Even in the 1960s, I can recall sitting in my blue-gray gabardine uniform in a parochial school and being instructed that when a person married "outside the Faith," it was the Catholic spouse's responsibility to do his or her very best to convert the non-Catholic spouse. Right from the beginning, then, religion virtually guaranteed that my parents' marriage would be as much a contest as a partnership.

It was a contest that ended in a draw after over 30 years. My father eventually attended Sunday Mass each week. When he died suddenly at 58, his funeral was presided over by a humane and kind monsignor (the same one who had officiated without much question over my own marriage to a man who came from generations of Methodists). Dad is buried in Sacred Heart Catholic cemetery on a mountainside just outside the small Pennsylvania coal-mining town where my mother grew up. But he never converted. When he looked deep into his soul, he saw a Christian who had a firm faith in God, but he never quite saw a Catholic.

Having witnessed this struggle as a child made me especially sensitive to the ways in which this issue's articles show how religion, unquestionably a powerful force in the life of this region, can not only unite Appalachians but has the potential to divide them as well. Churches, after all, are collections of fallible human beings trying to live in accordance with divine laws and wisdom.

Jerry Richardson's short story, "Funeral" (p. 21), helped me see the humor in preachers' sincere but futile attempts to bring the narrator's affable, unyielding father into the fold. I understood what novelist Robert Morgan is talking about in his essay, "The Gift of Tongues," (p. 7) when he relates how disagreements over religious practice had caused a rift in his family, a rift that went on for generations. And I felt for the Baptist women described by noted Appalachian scholar Howard Dorgan, women who stand by and grieve while the men in their lives quarrel, and those quarrels result in irreparable divisions within their churches and their communities.

But of course religions do not just create divisions. In this issue, we also read in "At Home in the Web of Life" (p. 30) by John Rausch about the Appalachian Catholic bishops' 1995 pastoral letter, a message urging all people to find ways to create sustainable communities. Joel Davis' "Faith and Medicine" (p.15) shows how medical students can elect to receive training in how to recognize in a respectful way the important role patients' beliefs play in their treatment. In another article dealing with the connection between faith and healing, "A Link in a Chain" (p. 17), nurse Mary Rado Simpson details how caring women use their considerable organizational skills to form a prayer chain that crosses denominational lines to express support to people in times of crisis. Bill Leonard relates in "Ministering to Appalachia" (p. 12) how the Appalachian Ministries Educational Resource Center also brings together the clergy of various Christian denominations in its attempt to equip them to be of service to Appalachia.

I was most moved, however, when I read about Rabbi Wein's attitude towards intermarriage in Deborah Weiner and Maryanne Reed's "The Jews of Beckley, West Virginia" (p. 3). It was a tolerance he acted upon at a time when most fellow rabbis refused to recognize such unions, a tolerance he continues to practice even now when many Jews still perceive intermarriage as a threat. What would my own life have been like if there had been such a member of the clergy, one who invited — rather than coerced — newlyweds from other faiths to participate in a different religious tradition if they wished?

❖❖❖

With this issue, we say goodbye to yet another student employee. During his two semesters with us, Joel Davis has been hard-working and very serious about improving his craft. We have also been the beneficiaries of his slightly off-kilter sense of humor. He'll be taking a job at the *Morristown (Tenn.) Citizen Tribune* after his December graduation. We hope they appreciate him, and we hope they get his jokes.

— Jane Harris Woodside, editor

Letters to the editor:

HandMade in America

On behalf of the Board of Directors of HandMade in America and myself, I would like to thank you for the story about HandMade and its beginnings, written by Kathleen Wilson. This has been our only coverage written by an actual participant in our planning and organizational process, and it is the perspective most valued by us as an organization. We are delighted to have been published in *Now & Then,* with its reputation for excellent perspectives on our Appalachian region.

Becky Anderson
HandMade in America
Asheville, N.C.

You know, reading that article about HandMade in *Now & Then* was the first time I'd really been able to get a coherent idea of what HandMade is all about. I'd gotten glimmers and glimpses and felt an enormous rush of excitement, but that article pulled it together for me. HandMade in America really is a grand undertaking.

Fred Chappell
Greensboro, NC

Letters to the editor should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to: Editor, *Now & Then,* East Tennessee State University, PO Box 70556, Johnson City TN 37614. Letters may be edited for length and clarity before publication.

Contradiction, Compromise & Commitment: The Jews of Beckley, West Virginia

The struggle to maintain a Jewish identity in Beckley is repeated over and over again in Appalachia.

Rabbi Isadore Wein looked out on a crowded sanctuary at the Jewish New Year services at Temple Beth El in Beckley, W.Va., this past September. From 82-year-old Sidney Fink, the only remaining founder of the temple, to two-year-old Aaron Sopher, a fourth generation Beckley Jew, the entire Jewish population of Beckley was gathered.

The Rabbi could remember a time, not long ago, when the number of Jewish families in town had dropped so low that the future of the Jewish community looked bleak. Today, Temple Beth El has the feeling of "a youthful and vibrant community," according to young Aaron's uncle, 38-year-old Tom Sopher.

Beckley's Jewish population is still much too small, however, to account for the 100 or so people who filled the temple that night. So who were the rest of the folks in the crowd?

Well, there was a fundamentalist Christian couple from the nearby hamlet of Sophia. And there was an ex-governor of West Virginia. In fact, probably a third of the crowd was not Jewish. They came because they were curious or because they had friends in the congregation or because Rabbi Wein's sermons, which draw upon Jewish tradition but deal with universal themes, have been known to make listeners weep.

But the story of that Rosh Hashanah gathering is more than the story of a religious minority's success in forging good relations with the surrounding Christian majority. It's the story of a small Jewish community's determination to maintain its religious traditions through a combination of stubborn persistence and flexible adaptation.

Courtesy of Sidney Fink

After the late 1950s, when Kenny Fink (joined by his parents Sidney and Irene) became a bar mitzvah, the Jewish population of Beckley declined drastically, but it managed to hang on until an upswing in the 1990s.

Maintaining a Tradition

Present-day descendants of the first Beckley Jews feel a deep connection to the past that carries with it a strong desire to transmit their Jewish heritage to future generations. As Tom Sopher puts it, "I was raised Jewish, and my dad was raised Jewish, and his father was raised Jewish. It would be a shame if, in the 1990s, all of a sudden we decided we would not be Jews. I don't want to be the one to break the tradition of Judaism in my family."

Jews arrived in Central and Southern Appalachia shortly after the opening of the coalfields around the turn of the century. Mostly emigrants from the Russian Empire, they came as peddlers, traversing the region on foot or with horse and wagon, selling their wares in the coal camps and small towns that sprang up throughout the area. They soon began to settle as merchants and shopkeepers in county seats and other centers of the booming coal economy.

In Southern West Virginia, small Jewish communities thrived in towns such as Beckley, Williamson, Logan, and Welch until the mid-1950s, when the combination of the sinking coal economy and changing consumer patterns led to their decline. In recent years, many Appalachian Jewish communities have all but died out, and the fate of many others hangs in the balance.

In the early years, Beckley was known as "the utopia for business," according to Manuel Pickus, whose uncles opened a department store in town in 1911. As the Jews of Beckley prospered, they started

by Deborah Weiner and Maryanne Reed

raising families and soon turned to the task of organizing themselves as a religious community. Fittingly, their first communal activities demonstrated their own concern with generational continuity. In 1921, they organized a religious school for one dozen or so Jewish children; it was taught by male and female community members in private homes.

The first high holiday services were held that same year in honor of Pickus' widowed grandmother, who had just arrived from Russia to live with her sons. History does not record whether two peculiar circumstances surrounding this service bothered the traditional, devoutly Orthodox Sana Moskovitch Pickus: A student rabbi from the liberal Reform branch of Judaism conducted the service — and it was held in a Presbyterian Church because the Jewish congregation did not yet have the means to acquire a building of its own.

Being Jewish in Beckley has never been easy. Far from the major metropolitan centers of American Judaism, lacking in resources because of its small size, forced to meld into one congregation people from a variety of Jewish backgrounds and beliefs, the Beckley Jewish community has been forged out of compromise, contradiction, and commitment. Nathan Berman — a scrap dealer who, according to Rabbi Wein, erected the Temple Beth El building in 1935 "almost single-handedly with used materials" — exemplified this commitment, as does Rabbi Wein himself.

Courtesy of Tom Sopher

In 1994, three generations of his Jewish family take part in the bar mitzvah of Max Sopher (l to r: grandfather Ira Sopher, Max, Rabbi Isadore Wein, Max Lewin, and father Tom Sopher).

A Rabbi & A Pharmacist

In fact, the story of the 83-year-old rabbi's tenure at Temple Beth El tells a lot about the character of the Beckley congregation. Wein came to Beckley in 1940 from New Jersey, having met and fallen in love with Jean Abrams, a local Jewish woman whose father was in the clothing business. Although trained as a rabbi, he had rejected a career in the rabbinate to become a pharmacist. At the time he arrived in town, according to Wein, the congregation "could not yet afford a rabbi, so I said in the interim, I will serve as your rabbi. And 56 years later, I'm still here."

Through the years, paid rabbis have come and gone, with Wein filling in on a volunteer basis whenever necessary, all the while running his father-in-law's clothing business and working as a pharmacist. He has conducted weddings and funerals for dozens of Beckley Jews and presided over the religious training of four generations of children. Manuel Pickus, now 65, was Wein's first bar mitzvah student. Tom Sopher remembers studying for his bar mitzvah at the pharmacy where Wein worked, learning Hebrew prayers from an old 78 album and sitting behind one counter reciting out loud as Wein filled pharmaceutical orders from another counter. He had to stop from time to time so Wein could serve his customers.

After his then four-year-old son recovered from a life-threatening illness in the 1950s, Wein experienced a renewed dedication to his faith. At that time, he says, "I made a pledge that Temple Beth El would never close. Temple Beth El is never going to close as long as I live." At one time, Wein remembers, for the high holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, "we didn't have enough seats. People were standing in the aisles." At other times, "we had to go out and collect money every month to pay the rabbi. That's how bad it was."

Since the late 1950s, the Jewish population has declined sharply. From a peak of 72 families after World War II, it dropped to just eight families in the 1980s. The congregation has not had a paid rabbi for decades. According to Sopher, Wein "kept Temple Beth El going when no one was even there." But recently, the local economy has started to diversify, and the Jewish population appears to be on the rebound, doubling to 16 families, making both Sopher and Wein hopeful for the future.

Everyone Counts

The congregation's fluctuating size is only one challenge its members have faced. The Jewish immigrants to Beckley "came from homes which were originally and strongly Orthodox," according to a congregational history. Orthodox Judaism encompasses an entire way of life, which includes dietary laws, various other rituals, and a strict observance of the Sabbath which prohibits all work on Saturday. But, declares Wein, "It's impossible to practice Orthodoxy in a community like Beckley." From the beginning, adaptations had to be made — such as bringing in the Reform student rabbi for the first high holiday services. The Reform branch of Judaism, a more liberal version of the religion that makes concessions to modern life, sends student

"I made a pledge that Temple Beth El is never going to close as long as I live."

rabbis out to isolated Jewish communities across America.

Pickus remembers that "my family was as Orthodox as they could be while they were living in Beckley, W.Va." Because so much of Jewish practice centers on the home, women often played a key role in maintaining ritual. Jean Abrams Wein, who grew up in a nearby coal camp before moving to Beckley as a teenager, recalls that "my mother was very religious — not my father." Esther Abrams kept the traditional Jewish Sabbath and tried to maintain a strictly kosher home under extremely difficult circumstances. Some local grocery stores stocked a few Jewish food items, but Beckley Jews often traveled the 60 miles to Charleston or the 350 miles to Baltimore to purchase holiday foods. Kosher meats packed in dry ice were shipped in from Baltimore or Cincinnati but often spoiled along the way.

Saturday, when the coal miners were paid, was the busiest shopping day of the week, so strict Sabbath observance was out of the question for Jewish merchants. Eventually, even the most religious Jews began to adapt, and by the mid-1950s, Beckley Jews "observed few or none of the Orthodox customs," according to the congregational history.

But as Rabbi Wein points out, whether Orthodox or Reform, Jews "all believe in the same precepts. They don't change." Gradually abandoning Orthodox rituals, the Jewish community instead based its religious life around the family, Jewish education for the young, the celebration of Jewish holidays, and the communal activities of the temple. Says Pickus, "A great deal of what we did was Jewish: family, food, religious holidays. A lot of my religious education was in the home." All the Jewish boys were expected to undergo a bar mitzvah ceremony at age 13, and this tradition carries on today for both boys and girls (for whom the term is bat mitzvah).

Communal life centers around the temple. The current Sunday school teacher, former Beckley resident Ami Lamborn, comes in from Charleston once a month to teach around 10 children. A student rabbi from Cincinnati also continues to visit once a month to conduct services and Sunday school, with Rabbi Wein taking over for the high holiday services.

Sopher wryly notes that "one of the biggest challenges is getting people to come to temple on a Friday night" when competition from local football games and other social events is particularly fierce. Yet because of the congregation's small size, members feel an attachment to the temple that could well exceed the feeling in large city congregations, where the temples are huge but are generally full only on holidays. In Beckley, a higher percentage of the congregation participates regularly — and if they don't attend, their absence is felt. "Everyone counts," says Sopher. "They count a lot." With no paid staff, the temple's congregation relies on members to take care of everything from mowing the lawn to bookkeeping. Says Sopher, "Every one of us feels that Temple Beth El is our temple. We all pitch in. We all try to make it work."

Deborah Weiner

Temple Beth El was constructed in 1935 under the leadership of Nathan Berman. A rededication ceremony took place in October, 1996.

Intermarriage

Perhaps the most striking example of the way the Beckley congregation has turned potential adversity into a benefit for the community is its response to intermarriage. Marriage to non-Jews has been a common occurrence for three generations of Beckley Jews. But unlike most of organized American Jewry, which views intermarriage as a threat to Jewish survival, Rabbi Wein and Temple Beth El welcome intermarried families and believe they have strengthened the congregation.

Wein performed his first intermarriage wedding ceremony 40 years ago at a time when it was all but unheard of for rabbis to sanction such unions. He takes the radical position that Jewish survival is enhanced, not harmed, by intermarriage. "To refuse to accept intermarriage, you're turning two families away from Judaism. The door swings both ways." In Beckley, intermarried couples consist mostly of Jewish men and non-Jewish women, several of whom play a prominent role in the temple, prompting Wein to observe that "the women who come into Judaism are much better observers of Judaism than our Jewish girls."

Ironically, women continue to take the lead in upholding Jewishness, just as they did in Esther Abrams' time — but for the past couple generations, these women have not been born Jews. Thirty-one-year-old Gina Stone, daughter of a coal miner, grew up as a Presbyterian and married a Jew who moved to Beckley from New York. Several years ago, she decided that her daughter "needed to grow up with religion, and that whatever we decided, we needed to do it together as a family." She knew that even though her husband had been away from the temple for many years, Judaism was im-

"To refuse to accept intermarriage, you're turning two families away from Judaism. The door swings both ways."

portant to him. At her urging, the three of them started going to temple. "The more I observed the Jewish traditions, the more it felt right," says Stone. She eventually converted to Judaism, her daughter is preparing for her bat mitzvah, and all three participate fully in the life of the temple.

Women continue to take the lead in upholding Jewishness — but for the past couple generations, these women have not been born Jews.

Stone followed a path pioneered by Tom Sopher's mother, also a coal miner's daughter. According to her son, Mary Jo Sopher was "real influential in making us go to temple and be Jews. She said, 'They're either going to be Jews, or we're going to go to church.' We decided that we would go to temple."

Mary Jo Sopher says that her determination to instill religious values in her children led her to study Judaism, and although she never formally converted, she made it part of her own and her family's life. "I have done a lot of reading. I feel like Temple Beth El is my temple." Growing up in a coal camp, she says, "I never had met any Jewish people." But the Beckley Jewish community "accepted me immediately," and she soon became one of its most active members, serving for a time as president of the Temple Sisterhood. She also oversaw her sons' religious education. "I insisted that they have a bar mitzvah. I couldn't teach them the Hebrew, but I could have them to read the English."

Tom Sopher's own religious commitment shows that children of intermarried couples can be as dedicated to Judaism as people whose parents were both ethnically Jewish — bearing out Wein's contention that "we don't *lose* the children. We *gain*." Sopher is doing his best to pass Jewish tradition on to his own children, even though he himself is married to a non-Jew. His son became a bar mitzvah recently, and his daughter is currently studying for her bat mitzvah. "I saw an importance for Judaism in my life. Like my mother, I wanted to see my kids have some kind of religious background." He asserts that "my kids feel real strong about being Jews."

Wein argues that an individual's commitment to Judaism stems from "exposure to temple, to Sunday school, to a little bit of history. That's what makes people Jewish." He points out that "Moses was not married to a Jewess." Being Jewish is a way of life, he concludes, not a matter of birth. In other words, "You don't have to be Jewish to be Jewish."

The Future

What with Wein's unconventional leadership and the commitment of its members, the Beckley congregation has strengths that belie its small numbers. This strength was evident at a rededication ceremony honoring the temple's 60th birthday this past October, as an overflow crowd of some 200 people — congregation members, former members who have moved away, and friends from the larger Beckley community — gathered to pay tribute to the Jewish community's heritage and persistence.

As demographic trends cause small Jewish congregations to disappear from small towns across America, it is impossible to say how long Temple Beth El will survive. It will no doubt continue to need an influx of Jews from outside the area. But the welcoming nature of its members and their commitment to passing on the tradition seem to bode well for the future. N&T

Deborah Weiner is a graduate student in history at West Virginia University, Morgantown, W.Va.; her research focuses on Jewish communities in Appalachia. She also serves as assistant editor of the Journal of Appalachian Studies. *Maryanne Reed is assistant professor of journalism at West Virginia University. Some of the interview material in this article is taken from a videodocumentary Reed is currently producing on the Jewish community of Beckley, W.Va.*

A Voice Whispered

End all, be all, wheel of life,
roll round, and round, and round.
Let sand sound sing upon
wagon's spoked circle round
and fall like meteors to dirt again.
What song does the wheel sing?
Which man first drew the circle
and made himself an engineer?
What power makes the wheel turn?
Was it mule or man's mind?
"Neither," a voice whispered.
"Both are spokes; each may be broken;
and miraculously, the wheel,
end all, be all, will roll round,
circle of fire and light, unbroken."

— John Cantey Knight

John Cantey Knight met his wife, who is from the North Georgia mountains, while attending Young Harris College, Young Harris, Ga. in 1968. He is from Atlanta and intends his final resting place to be North Georgia.

The Gift of Tongues

by Robert Morgan

When I was growing up in a tiny North Carolina mountain community, we still felt the aftershocks of a religious quarrel that went back to the previous century. There had been a feud at the church, stretching back almost to Confederate times, between the Old Regular Baptists and the Missionary Baptists.

The Old Regulars, or Hard-shells, believed it a sin to have musical instruments in church. They believed in predestination and thought it futile to try to win converts among the lost. The Missionary Baptists understood their primary mission to be saving souls, and they considered music and musical instruments important tools of their ministry. The argument became a kind of family quarrel, passed down through the generations, and each faction tried at least once to expel the other from membership. My great-grandfather Pace had given land for the church, but once even he was forced out of the congregation.

The conflict was aggravated even more in the 1890s when my great-grandfather and one of his daughters, Sarah Matilda, began attending Pentecostal services held by a visiting evangelist. In tents and improvised shelters made of tree limbs, Sarah Matilda, my grandmother, spoke in tongues and performed holy dances at the services. Her sister and, later, her husband, bitterly disapproved. The arguments over doctrine and manner of worship, baptism of fire versus the traditional baptism of water, were so intense they verged on violence. My grandfather Morgan was furious when Sarah Matilda kept attending the Holiness meetings after their marriage. One evening he was so angry she had gone to a prayer meeting at her brother's house that he took his shotgun and fired repeatedly across the pasture.

The effects of that quarrel were felt in the family even after I was born. Daddy used to point out to me the apple tree below the house where he went to cry at age seven when his mother died. He always took her side and blamed his father, I think, for her early death. When he was in his teens, he began attending Pentecostal services and participating in the shouting and speaking in tongues.

As a boy I, too, was taken to both Baptist and Pentecostal meetings, and I was always aware of the tension revolving around the conflict in the family and community. I was ashamed and frightened of the Pentecostal services, but they also thrilled me. In psychology courses in college, I read about glossolalia and the phenomenon of mass hypnosis in charismatic services. But I was almost forty years old before I could bring myself to write a poem about it.

It was only after writing "The Gift of Tongues" that I realized why the experience was almost too frightening to remember. For someone sensitive to language, to the crafting of language, nothing could be more scary than language gushing out of control. Total spontaneity, total inspiration, is as frightening in its way as writer's block, as tongue-tiedness. To have no control over the voice reduces the human, and the artist, to a haunted medium at best, a ventriloquist's dummy at worst.

Nevertheless, the power of the Pentecostal meeting was undeniable. The intensity of the experience is addictive and irreplaceable. In my novel, *The Truest Pleasure,* I made up a story set in the Carolina mountains at the turn of the century to show how a woman — a wife and mother — needs the services, has the hunger for a transcendent experience she can find nowhere else. As much as she looks for substitutes, she fails to find any lasting equivalent except, perhaps, care for those she loves. To her, modern secular life is only partial life. Painful and painfully dividing as her quarrel with her husband is, she has no choice but to live her spiritual gift and destiny, embarrassing and excessive as it may seem to others.

No wonder lives have been wrenched apart, even shattered, by such possession and fulfillment. No wonder the rest of us can only marvel at, and perhaps envy, the awful gift. N&T

Robert Morgan left the mountains of North Carolina in 1971 to teach writing at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y. The Truest Pleasure, *published by Algonquin Books, is reviewed on page 38.*

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The Gift of Tongues

The whole Church got hot and vivid
with the rush of unhuman chatter
above the congregation,
and I saw my father looking at
the altar as though electrocuted.
It was a voice I'd never heard
but knew as from other centuries.
It was the voice of awful fire.
"What's he saying?" Ronald hissed
and jabbed my arm. "Probably Hebrew."
The preacher called out another
hymn, and the glissade came again,
high syllables not from my father's
lips but elsewhere, the flare of
higher language, sentences of light.
And we sang and sang again, but
no one rose as if from sleep to
be interpreter, explain the writing
on the air that still shone there like
blindness. None volunteered a gloss
or translation or receiver
of the message. My hands hurt
when pulled from the pew's varnish
they'd gripped and sweated so. Later
standing under the high and plain-
sung pines on the mountain I clenched
my jaws like pliers, holding in
and savoring the gift of silence.

— Robert Morgan

Divide and Multiply: Baptist Diversity in Appalachia

by Howard Dorgan

"If two of our brethren become stranded on a deserted island, a week later they will have separate churches, with neither institution recognizing the other."

"When two of our believers engage in theological debate, they tend to formulate four theologies, each debater proving incapable even of self-agreement."

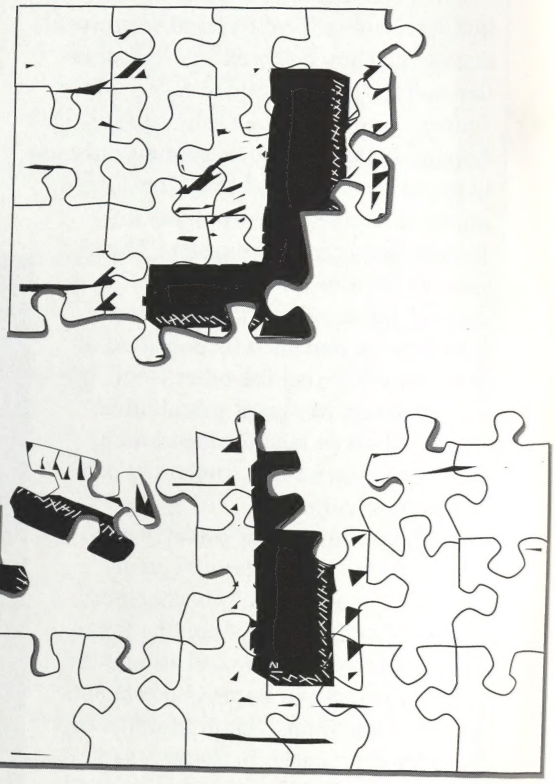
—Two witticisms often voiced by Baptists about Baptists

These within-the-family jabs at the Baptist denomination's propensity for splitting apart arise from the faith's avowed love of theological argument. It is a romance that has produced not only a history of great American doctrinal debates, extending all the way from our colonial period to the present, but it has also spawned a wide and theologically diverse range of Baptist subdenominations.

The resulting splinter groups occasionally assume such colorful names as the Duck River Baptists and Kindred, General Six Principle Baptists, Jasper, New Hope, and Truevine Baptists. All five of these factions have a presence in Southern or Central Appalachia. Then there are other perhaps equally obscure branches, such as the Enterprise Regular Baptists, the General Baptists, the Barren River Missionary, Pleasant Valley, and Landmark Baptists, as well as the Primitive Baptist Universalists. Still, this is only a partial list. Indeed, Baptist diversity is so rich in our mountains that 30 or more theologically or behaviorally distinct Baptist divisions are alive and well within the region.

The Baptist Montage

People unfamiliar with the larger Baptist family can become easily confused even when encountering the major, or "mainline," units of this denomination. Those mainline denominations include, first of all, the Southern Baptists who, with over 15-million members, constitute the largest Protestant denomination in the United States. The term *Protestant* has to be used cautiously, however, since many Baptists reject the term, arguing that their faith dates back to John the Baptist and therefore predates the Protestant Reformation.



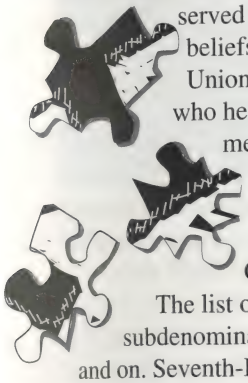
Nancy Fischman

Then there are the American Baptists, formerly known as Northern Baptists. The Northern and Southern branches separated from each other in 1845 over antebellum regional disagreements about issues such as slavery. Yet another mainline Baptist subdenomination is the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, found largely in the upper Midwest. A fundamentalist offshoot of the American Baptists, the General Association of Regular Baptists should by no means be confused with the Regulars of Appalachia. Finally, rounding out our discussion of mainline denominations are the National Baptists. The National Baptists are predominantly African-American congregations, with churches scattered throughout the nation.

A student of Appalachian religion, however, must sort out a host of additional groups. For instance, there are the Central Baptists, a less "Hard-shell" (or fundamentalist) strain which broke off from the Eastern District Primitives. Central Baptists are prevalent in the Tri-Cities area of Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia. Found in West Virginia and other parts of Central Appalachia, German Baptists are often called "the Dunkers" or "the Dunkards" because of their dipped-forward style of baptism by immersion. Then there is a wide variety of Missionary Baptists, including the Old Missionary Baptists, one of the most

traditional sects within this genre, as well as an equally wide assortment of Primitive Baptists, with perhaps as many as a dozen or more different branches falling within this group.

In addition to the Old Regular Baptists, who are arguably one of the most traditional of Baptist subdenominations, there are also Regular Baptists and Separate Baptists, both of whom were in these mountains before the last quarter of the 18th century and both of whom have preserved many of their original beliefs and practices. The Union Baptists were those who held pro-Union sentiments. Once a faction of Regular Baptists, they went their own way just after the Civil War.



The list of Appalachian Baptist subdenominations continues on and on. Seventh-Day Baptists maintain Saturday as their Sabbath, and the Two-Seed in the Spirit Predestinarian Baptists believe that each human being is either a child of good, who carries the predestined seed of God, or a child of evil, who carries the equally predestined seed of Satan. Last, but certainly not least, are the Primitive Baptist Universalists, currently my personal favorites. Primitive Baptist Universalists reject any possibility of hell in the afterlife and are the Baptists who are known in the mountains as the "No-Hellers."

"Why can't a Baptist just stay a Baptist?"
— A question directed to the author by a member of a lecture audience October 1995

"You can love your brother, but if he falls into error, you must separate yourself from him."
— Farley R. Beavers, a Primitive Baptist Universalist elder, addressing the circumstances of a recent split in the Three Forks of Powell's River Regular Primitive Baptist Association August 1995

Issues

Baptists in both the mainline denominations and in the more localized, regional subdenominations have parted company as the result of a wide variety of controversies. However, the great debates that have tended to divide various Appalachian Baptists into clusters have arisen primarily over doctrine, worship practice, church governance, and sociocultural matters, including a number of purely gender-related questions.

Among doctrinal disputes, by far the most heated have been generated by differences in atonement theology, which tries to answer the question: For whom did Christ die? Did he only die for an elect, "the Church," chosen before the beginning of time and separated from the nonelect here in the temporal world? Or did the Son of God die for each and every person who by "free will" chooses to believe in him and to behave according to his precepts? Then there is the view that Christ died for "all," regardless of their transgressions here on earth.

Each Baptist subdenomination can be placed on its respective spot on an atonement doctrine continuum, with perhaps the Double Predestination Primitives occupying the most "Hard-shell," limited atonement position. Double Predestination doctrine argues that God foreordains *all* things, including determination of just who will benefit from Christ's atonement. God chose who would and would not be saved before time began.

In marked contrast, the Primitive Baptist Universalists, the No-Hellers, hold down the most "Soft-shell" spot on the continuum with their belief in universal atonement. Absolute Universalism proclaims that the benefits of atonement are unavoidable, that "all of God's children" will be lifted to enjoy a heavenly reunion with him.

Nevertheless, there are other doctrinal issues of import, and impassioned disputes erupt over various questions. For example, people disagree about whether on the Day of Judgment, the just will enjoy a spiritual or a physical resurrection. Will our actual bodies exist in heaven? If so, at what stage of life will we be preserved? And if Mom and Dad live on in a state of perpetual youth, will we still be able to recognize them?

There are many other arguments over the fine points of predestination. If God has a will, and if that will is sovereign, how can his absolute determinism in all matters be denied? How can I exercise free will without that exercise being an affront to my creator's omnipotent will?

Baptists also differ over the nature and origins of good and evil. If God is the only creator and if he is all-good, can he have created evil? But if he didn't, who did? Is Satan a creative force for evil, equal to God's creative force for good? These last questions influenced the formation of the "Two-Seed" doctrine in the early 19th century, that deterministic position held by Two-Seed in the Spirit Predestinarian Baptists. Under this set of beliefs, an all-good God can create no evil, but an all-evil Satan can and does.

Baptist congregations have split over worship practices such as whether or not to allow instrumental music during services and the proper way to conduct a baptism. Some, for example, insist that "living water" baptisms — which take place in natural bodies of water such as creeks and rivers — are the only acceptable forms of the ritual, while others feel that undergoing the ritual in a church baptistry should be allowed

Churches have also divided over varying philosophies of church governance. There have been disputes over what the power of the local church should be vis-à-vis the larger association of which the church is a member, the associations usually consisting of a fairly loose confederation of a number of churches in the vicinity. Baptists have also quarreled over what if any role women should have in church operations and over what the rules of decorum should be for meetings of the local church or of the association.

The Union Association of Old Regular Baptists has probably quarreled more over "bobbed hair" and "double marriage" than over all the rest of the other social and cultural issues combined.

Old Regular Baptists and a number of other Old-Time Baptist groups, including most Primitives, Old Regulars, and Uniteds, have doggedly defended the conservative positions on each of these issues, including the separation of gen-

ders within their meetinghouses during services and special rituals. For these "Old-Time" groups, social and cultural issues are especially troublesome. They worry about questions such as: Can women cut their hair? What are appropriate dress codes for women? Should divorce and then remarriage while the former spouse still lives (known as "double marriage") be permitted? Is disorderly conduct outside of church sufficient cause for exclusion from fellowship? In recent years, in fact, the Union Association of Old Regular Baptists, with churches primarily in Southwest Virginia and Eastern Kentucky, has probably quarreled more over "bobbed hair" and "double marriage" than over all the rest of all the other social and cultural issues combined.

Howard Dorgan

Hale Creek Old Regular Baptist Church, near Pilgrim Knob, Buchanan County, Va. The church sign says "Regular Baptist" due to the fact that a number of Old Regular meetinghouses of Central Appalachia have dropped the "Old" from their posted name.

Divisions

When you travel the highways of Appalachia, it's not difficult to see concrete evidence of these subdivisions of Baptist congregations. Frequently, two meetinghouses stand side-by-side or in close proximity to each other. Often they share the same name, and occasionally, they share the original acreage.

In Alleghany County, N.C., two Saddle Mountain Baptist churches rest beside the Blue Ridge Parkway, barely 50 yards from each other. One is Regular Baptist and the other, Union Baptist. In Buchanan County, Va., near the juncture of Dismal River and Hale Creek, sit an Old Regular Hale Creek Baptist Church and a Primitive Baptist Universalist Hale Creek Church. These two subdenominations are also represented by close-lying church structures beside Highway 83 between Grundy, Va., and Bradshaw, W.Va. The Bee Branch Primitive Baptist Universalist Church rests on the McDowell County, W.Va., side of Bradshaw Mountain; the Bee Branch Old Regular Baptist Church sits on the Buchanan County, Va. side. These two buildings serve as physical manifestations of a split which occurred more than a century ago.

Frequently, two meetinghouses stand side-by-side or in close proximity to each other. Often they share the same name and occasionally they share the original acreage.

When these types of splits occur, the consequences can be wide-ranging and severe, dividing not only preacher from preacher, but neighbor from neighbor, family member from family member, and occasionally even husband from wife. The history of these churches is replete with stories of spousal relationships being maintained for decades in every way, except that the partners attended different branches of the Baptist church.

In general, however, a wife goes along with her husband when deciding which side of a split to support. That custom often means that women suffer the greater emotional pain. Usually stripped of any power to influence such battles, females typically become pawns in the process, forced simply to endure the separations that eventually ensue. At moments of division, they embrace sisters who move to other camps, and they weep over fellowship sacrificed to what was largely a masculine conflict. The men, especially the elders, at least have the satisfaction of experiencing those passions aroused by the contest, and they find comfort in their perceptions of their own doctrinal correctness. Often the women are left to bemoan the estrangements.

Entire congregations occasionally become engaged in extensive legal battles over the church's property and the church's name, with each side wanting both. It helps, of course, if one camp counts among its members the officially named trustees of the church. It also helps if that camp contains the larger portion of the original membership.

At times, however, the property part of the dispute is settled by a family who actually owns the land and the meetinghouse. Such private ownership of a church and its grounds still exists in these mountains, with the church structure and property having been made available to the fellowship years and years ago. In addition, the politics of the key litigants can influence the outcome of legal battles, especially if one side happens to be more favored by the judicial powers of the moment.

A particular faction's demand that they be allowed to use the original name can be especially troublesome and lead to even more litigation. Control of the name usually suggests ownership of that church's heritage, with all the prestige that comes with it. For example, the Elkhorn Association of Southwest Virginia and Southern West Virginia was the first Baptist association west of the Alleghenies when it was established in 1785, but it has since split into numerous

Howard Dorgan

Hale Creek Primitive Baptist Universalist Church, near Pilgrim Knob, Buchanan County, Va.

small factions. Still, each of these divisions, including two Primitive Baptist Universalist associations, claims 1785 as their founding year. The same is true for the two sides of the Washington District Association of Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia which was divided by a 1924 split. One branch became Regular Primitive Baptist, while the other became the mother association of the Primitive Baptist Universalists. Each now claims 1812 as its founding year.

A Final Thought

With its wonderfully rich collection of Baptist subgroups, Appalachia could be listed as one of the most religiously diverse areas of America, a fact that all on its own should discourage people from limiting their idea of the region's religion to images of Holiness snake handlers.

Indeed, there may be no one group or one single religious practice that can become the prototypic symbol for the region's spiritual life. Imbued with a strong streak of independence, Appalachians are slow to embrace worldwide, nationwide, or even region-wide church models or hierarchies. Local churches — or at most, their respective associations — stand as the final voice in doctrinal or behavioral matters so that one of these discreet theological movements may reach no farther than the length and breadth of a handful of mountain counties. Nevertheless, the small number of adherents and limited geographic distribution of many of these groups do not discourage them from asserting that they are the direct and true descendants of the Church of St. Paul, to claim what the Old Baptists call "true-vineness."

At a time when diversity is a venerated cultural value — and rightfully so — we should deepen our appreciation of the Appalachian Baptists, who have seldom hesitated to divide and multiply. N&T

Howard Dorgan, professor of communication at Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C., has authored Giving Glory to God in Appalachia, The Old Regular Baptists of Appalachia, Airwaves of Zion, *and the forthcoming* In the Hands of a Happy God, *all from University of Tennessee Press. This last work will feature the Primitive Baptist Universalists of Central Appalachia.*

To learn more about Baptist subdenominations, consult the Dictionary of Baptists in America *edited by Bill J. Leonard and the* Appalachian Atlas: Maps of the Churches and People of the Appalachian Region *compiled by Clifford A. Grammich, Jr.*

Empty Pews

I stand outside the door, the sight of empty
pews barring my passage. Where my neighbor
sat, a spider has built a giant web,
a blue butterfly fluttering in its lustrous
orb. On the back of my best friend's pew,
dirtdaubers drone, building nests like mud
fingers. Even Sis and her man gone now,
building a bigger, whiter church across the hollow,
a place for rebels to worship, their baby
the firstfruits of its graveyard. A stranger
preached the funeral, me not even notified.
Gone the woman who played the organ for thirty
years, her music wheezing like her miner
husband's black breath. Gone the man who sang
like the angel Gabriel, "Amazing Grace"
pouring from the rafters, baptizing us
in joy and peace. Gone is Peace itself.
Like a spring freshet, fear rampages
through the hollow, uproots trust, erodes
fellowship, washes away harmony.
When the remnant comes to worship, if they come,
I'll memorialize these hollowed steps,
hallowed by generations of sainted feet,
this sagging door, its rusty hinges shrieking
dirges over the woes it's seen, these empty
pews, too cramped to hold our mighty discords.

— Elizabeth Howard

Elizabeth Howard lives in Crossville, Tenn. Her work has appeared in Appalachian Heritage, Caney Creek Sampler, River Oak Review, Now & Then, *and other journals.*

Ministering to Appalachia

by Bill J. Leonard

Seminarians roll up their sleeves to find out firsthand about life in Appalachia.

On a beautiful fall day in 1987, I got a call from Mary Lee Daugherty, a call that began my association with the consortium of seminaries known as Appalachian Ministries Educational Resource Center (AMERC).

Daugherty had founded AMERC two years before in the attic of her house in Charleston, W.Va. Now based in Berea, Ky., AMERC offers seminarians from a variety of Christian denominations the opportunity to study and experience aspects of Appalachian life, with particular attention to the practice of ministry in the region.

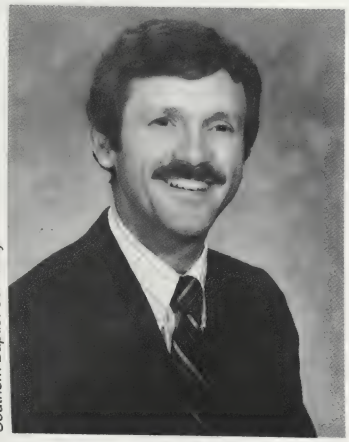
At the time, I was teaching church history at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. Daugherty, who holds a doctorate in American Studies and had once served as a Presbyterian missionary in Brazil, is from a West Virginia coal mining family. She had learned of my work on Appalachian religious history through *Foxfire 7,* a collection of oral histories gathered from various Appalachian practitioners for which I had written extensive historical introductions.

As AMERC director, she suggested that I join the program's summer faculty, and I accepted. For the next eight years, I participated in the AMERC program, teaching the Appalachian religion segment of the curriculum. During that time, the faculty and students who took part in the six-week summer course never failed to impress me.

In the Beginning

AMERC is now the largest seminary consortium in the United States, with over 88 participating schools, including Duke, Harvard, and Yale Divinity Schools, Baptist Seminary-Richmond, and Church of God (Cleveland) School of Theology, as well as Lutheran Southern, Princeton, Louisville Presbyterian, Wesley, and Asbury Seminaries. My own institution, the Wake Forest University Divinity School, will soon join the organization. Faculty or administrative representatives from each of the participating schools compose the organization's governing board.

Initially, the program rented offices, along with classroom and dormitory space, from Berea College. In 1993, Daugherty and Stephen Rhodes raised funds to purchase an 80-acre farm, located at the end of Harrison Road, about a mile from the college. Rhodes, then dean at Memphis Theological Seminary, became AMERC's chief academic officer. Both he and Daughtery moved to the farm and, with the help of volunteer labor, were able to renovate or add to existing buildings for office, classroom, and library facilities. Future plans call for the construction of student housing and a program of experimental farming in organic, environmentally sensitive agriculture, a new element of the AMERC program.



Southern Baptist Seminary

Bill Leonard

Financial support for AMERC largely comes from the participating schools and from numerous foundations, various contributing churches, and a small endowment. The total cost of the six-week program, which earns students up to six credit hours from their respective institutions, is approximately $3,000. This includes room and board, tuition, travel fees, and books. Some schools and denominational agencies provide scholarships for participants.

AMERC's Programs

The six-week summer program with which I am most familiar introduces students to elements of Appalachian social, religious, economic, and environmental life, allowing them to explore rural church, family farm, or community development endeavors. Students live in the dorms at Berea College and attend classes at the AMERC farm.

Although AMERC had adopted the Appalachian Regional Commission's definition of Appalachia, which consists of nearly 400 counties extending from Southern New York State to Northeast Mississippi, the summer program concentrates on Central Appalachia. The curriculum includes lectures and class discussion on Appalachian social and religious realities, along with studies in congregational application.

Through the experiential learning component of the program, AMERC assigns students to one of approximately 50 placements in parish, farm, or community development settings located in the most economically depressed counties of Eastern Kentucky, Northern Tennessee, Southern West Virginia, and Southeast Ohio and arranges for them to make extended visits to various field locations. Organizing the students into small groups which meet daily creates the opportunity for theological reflection on the overall experience.

The program assigns the students to field placements that aim to teach them about an area in which they are particularly interested. For ex-

ample, if a seminarian wants to learn how to go into a county and set up a housing ministry, AMERC might well arrange for that individual to spend time with the Federation of Appalachian Housing. This Berea, Ky.-based organization works with 13 housing agencies throughout Appalachia in an effort to provide affordable housing by utilizing volunteer work teams from churches and other community groups to build and rehabilitate houses. There, the students can learn how to determine which families can qualify for such assistance, how to find funding, and how to put together work teams.

Ben Poage

AMERC students talking with a tobacco farmer.

In addition to the six-week summer program, AMERC offers a three-week summer course based in Berea but involving travel to churches, community development sites, and other religious programs in Central Appalachia. In January, seminarians may participate in one of three travel seminars, choosing from Northern, Central, or Southern Appalachian options; these seminars offer another opportunity to study the role of various churches in Appalachia as students move from place to place, surveying different types of ministries.

Finally, the staff has also recently instituted "immersion" experiences which introduce seminary faculty and students to aspects of the religious and economic life of Appalachia. These four-to-five-day immersion courses occur throughout the year. Participants also travel to parishes, community agencies, and schools under the leadership of a variety of specialists in Appalachian Studies and church life.

Not Without Controversy

Recently, AMERC has been the subject of some controversy as to its role in Appalachian religious and social life. In her 1995 work, *Appalachian Mountain Religion,* historian Deborah McCauley distinguishes between "mountain religion," represented by certain Baptist subgroups and independent Pentecostal Holiness churches, and the home mission churches established by Presbyterians, certain Methodists and Baptists, Episcopalians, and others. These mainstream Protestant denominations began establishing home missions in Appalachia in the 19th century to do much the same type of religious, social, and educational work that missionaries carried out in foreign missions abroad.

McCauley argues that AMERC has succumbed to the same sort of paternalistic thinking that has shaped the work of home missionaries since they first came to the region. In her view, AMERC, like those who have gone before, tends to ignore or devalue the vital religious life already in place in mountain congregations and subscribes instead to well-worn stereotypes, viewing Appalachians as exploited, powerless victims in need of having their religious life strengthened and their social injustices addressed. The debate over the accuracy of her views rages among many scholars of religion in the region and is a particularly sensitive issue to those who continue to function through mainline denominational systems.

I will concede that, as with any program of this nature, AMERC has experienced some difficulties along the way as it has made its contributions to the region. At its best, however, AMERC provides a rare opportunity for students, most of whom have little experience in Appalachia, to "get their feet wet" in "experiential learning" about the region. By the way, AMERC literally ends its summer program with a footwashing ritual created by the students and faculty to remind them that ministers of the gospel are in reality servants.

One of its strengths is that, as a consortium of theological schools, it brings together students and schools from across the theological and geographical spectrum: liberal, conservative, pentecostal, evangelical from Massachusetts to Texas. These seminaries recognize the need to introduce students to regional and rural ministry through such cooperative programs of study. In a sense, AMERC is a new model for collaborative education, offering a specialized program which individual schools could not maintain alone.

The ecumenical nature of the consortium introduces students to opportunities for peer interaction with colleagues from multiple denominations. In the six-week program, men and women from across the United States and other countries as well as from a variety of religious, racial, and regional traditions live, eat, study, and engage in dialogue together.

Daily student-led worship services illustrate the diversity. I have been present at such gatherings when Catholic sisters led morning prayer, using incense and written litanies from their tradition. The next morning, a Pentecostal female preacher gave the sermon, spoke in tongues, and offered opportunity for spontaneous prayers from the worshipping community. Once, at the end-of-summer footwashing service, the participants included assorted male and female Protestant ministers, a Franciscan from the Byzantine Rite of the Catholic Church in his brown habit, the CEO of one of the country's large New York-based foundations, and an Appalachian serpent-handling preacher whose revival service we had attended the previous night. As I watched that assortment of believers wash each other's feet, I realized that such a moment was about as ecumenical as you could get.

The Changing Seminary Landscape

The students reflect the changing profile of American seminarians. The average age is 30 to 33, with many embarking on the ministry as a second, sometimes third, career. Most have changed denominations at least once. The group is usually equally divided between men and women. Some of the students

in fact completed their graduate education and returned to work in the region; most plan to work in local parish churches.

AMERC introduces these students to both the theory and the practice of life and religion in the Appalachian region. Some spend the very first night that they have ever spent on a farm as part of the family farm study group. Others with urban roots get their first taste of rural parish life, often worshipping in Pentecostal Holiness churches or Old Regular Baptist congregations for the first time. Most of the term papers required for the course grow out of these experiential learning field placements.

At the end-of-summer footwashing service, the participants included a Franciscan from the Byzantine Rite of the Catholic Church, the CEO of one of the country's large New York-based foundations, and an Appalachian serpent-handling preacher.

Student research sometimes uncovers a gold mine of material. For example, one summer, an African American student discovered a collection of long overlooked church records in a community where the local mine company had built the Black Baptist church and had even paid the preacher. The records detailed the interaction between church and corporation in an Eastern Kentucky town.

During their time at AMERC, students encounter professors and lecturers with significant personal and scholarly expertise in Appalachian Studies. Daugherty founded the program with the assistance of Helen Lewis: sociologist, community organizer, practitioner, prophet, and, as educator and activist Myles Horton called her, "the mother of Appalachian Studies." In the decade that she taught in AMERC's summer program, Lewis introduced students to many different ideas and people, including Addie Davis, an articulate spokesperson for Primitive Baptist Universalism.

As scholar Howard Dorgan explains in his upcoming book, *In the Hands of a Happy God,* Primitive Baptist Universalists such as Davis are "No-Hellers." They are convinced that God ultimately will draw all persons to salvation, giving them hell in this world so that they can escape it in the next. Davis came to AMERC and "testified" to her life and faith experience, confessing her willingness to work in this world to make things better for her friends and neighbors in Southwest Virginia.

Lewis also brought students into her world, transporting them to Becky Simpson's Cranks Creek Survival Center in Harlan County, Ky., which helps provide the basic necessities of food, clothing, and shelter to area residents who need them. She also took them to Ivanhoe, Va., a small Southwest Virginia rural town that began to die when the industries built around nearby iron, zinc, and lead mines left town in the 1960s. There, she filled the students in on the grassroots community efforts that Lewis, community leader Maxine Waller, and others have attempted. And she had them visit the Highlander Education and Research Center in New Market, Tenn., the adult education center where Lewis herself now lives, a community which tries to perpetuate Horton's vision of empowerment for persons in Appalachia and throughout the world.

The list of AMERC lecturers include Berea's Loyal Jones; Appalachian State University's Howard Dorgan; University of Kentucky Appalachian Center director Ron Eller; sociologist Barbara Ellen Smith from the Women's Center at the University of Memphis; African American scholar William Turner; environmentalist and Presbyterian minister Richard Austin; folklorist Joan Mosley from Warren Wilson College; Presbyterian minister Marcia Myers; Catholic missiologist Louis McNeil; and Ben Poage, a Kentucky family farm specialist. These and other teachers and practitioners introduce students to the broad spectrum of Appalachian Studies and religious networks — local, regional, and denominational.

AMERC is not without its difficulties, however. Funding remains a problem, and the organization continually struggles to meet its annual budget. Some wonder whether the program has overextended itself, seeking to do too many things with limited resources. Others warn that the program has yet to articulate a clear-cut identity. Is it a seminary program, a resource for churches, a self-contained educational institution, a clearinghouse for Appalachian religious studies and practice — or a bit of all those things?

Whatever else it may be or become, the Appalachian Ministries Educational Resource Center offers seminarians an opportunity for integrating theological ideals with practical experience in a region where culture and religion intersect in powerful, sometimes ineffable, ways. N&T

Bill J. Leonard is Dean of Wake Forest University Divinity School, Winston-Salem, N.C. A frequent contributor to a variety of periodicals and journals, he is currently editing a collection of essays on religion in Appalachia.

Thursday Morning Psalm

Bless the Lord this morning
for the thick unseeing sleep
that buried me and rolled me out
to the gray music of this drizzly day
already underway
with its steady jingling of crickets
(the Lord's small change)
and Carolina wrens raining trills from the trees.
How good to stretch my arms
as the mockingbird sings wholehog
on the housetop, and cars slosh by,
their tires shaving off slabs of rain
as the streetlights blink
and the Lord looks down
to see it is good, this stained-glass day
in which I, in my robe, am figured.

— Suzanne Underwood Clark

Suzanne U. Clark is the author of a chapbook, Weather of the House, *published by Sow's Ear Press, and a nonfiction book,* Blackboard Blackmail. *Her poems are included in several anthologies. She teaches English part-time at King College, Bristol, Tenn.*

FAITH AND MEDICINE

by Joel Davis

Can a doctor afford to ignore your soul when trying to heal your body?

It all started with a simple question a patient asked: "Would you mind praying with me about this surgery tomorrow?" For Kenneth Olive, a physician and a minister's son, answering that question was no simple matter.

"My first impulse was to turn around and see who was looking," Olive admits. A career spent in health care had certainly not prepared him to deal with such a question. Perhaps even more disconcerting was the fact that the internist had recently read of a physician who had been dismissed by a hospital in Ohio for praying with a patient.

Despite his misgivings, Olive complied with the patient's request. Only afterwards did he begin to wonder what was appropriate in such situations. Were there any guidelines? Had anything ever been published in the medical literature?

Medical Media Production, V.A. Medical Center

Hugh Maddry

Little did he know that his questions would result in Spiritual and Religious Issues in Clinical Care, a new course offered at East Tennessee State University's (ETSU) James H. Quillen College of Medicine in Johnson City, Tenn. Meant to educate future health care providers and chaplains about such issues, the course was first taught in the spring of 1996 by Olive, an ETSU medical school faculty member, and Hugh Maddry, chief of patient support services at the James H. Quillen Veterans Affairs Medical Center, also in Johnson City.

Launching a Course

Both Maddry and Olive had developed the idea for such a course independently. Maddry, a Duke Divinity School graduate, had taught a course about spirituality at the University of Kansas medical school and wished to teach a similar course at ETSU's College of Medicine when he moved to his present position in 1991. Even though it was difficult to initiate a new course in the medical school curriculum, Maddry was not deterred and kept pushing the idea of the proposed course. He was later joined by Olive, who suggested they offer it to third- and fourth-year students as an elective. The addition of a practicing physician to the course apparently convinced the committee to approve the elective, Maddry says.

Together they obtained funding through the John Templeton Foundation, a nonprofit organization based in Radnor, Pa. The Foundation focuses on forging greater links between science and religion. Funding for the course is provided through the Foundation's Faith and Medicine Initiative, which offers monetary awards for courses that examine the role of faith and spirituality in health care.

In 1995, ETSU was one of the first five schools ever to be awarded a Faith and Medicine Initiative grant. It was one of only two Appalachian schools chosen, the other being Pennsylvania State University, and they were in distinguished company: Albert Einstein, Ohio State, and Johns Hopkins also received these grants. The course was so successful that the award has been renewed, guaranteeing that the class will be taught for at least the next three years.

University Relations, ETSU

Kenneth Olive

Outlooks and Outcomes

Religious issues in clinical care can be the grayest of gray areas. It often seems that the only time religion is openly addressed in health care is when new doctors invoke the Greek gods Apollo and Aesculapius while taking the Oath of Hippocrates during graduation. Olive's own search of the medical literature turned up little in the way of guidelines and even less in the way of articles on the subject.

This absence is striking, especially since, according to recent Gallup Poll surveys, Americans are still a religious people: 76 percent of those responding reported that prayer is an important part of daily life. But health care providers rarely address or ac-

Larry Smith, University Relations, ETSU

ETSU medical students talking with an elderly patient.

knowledge personal religious beliefs during their day-to-day clinical encounters. One of the reasons physicians such as Olive are not equipped to deal with this controversial and complex subject is that medical schools have not provided any preparation.

Third- and fourth-year ETSU medical students as well as pastoral students from various seminaries who are involved in a clinical pastoral education residency at the VA Medical Center attended this eight-week course; Maddry and Olive designed the course to help students deal with religious topics in their daily dealings with patients. Of 112 students eligible to enroll, 16 completed the first course.

According to Maddry, who has been a hospital chaplain for 29 years, the class covers a variety of issues. Included among the topics are the connections between spirituality and physical health; various religious and medical issues such as euthanasia and organ donation; the relationship between spirituality and addiction; and Appalachian culture and how it shapes both spirituality and attitudes towards health care. Participants spend time discussing medical controversies involving members of Christian denominations such as Jehovah Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, and Christian Scientists. They also examine how members of non-Christian faiths such as Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Judaism regard health care.

In the final meetings, each student presents a case study demonstrating how a patient's religious and spiritual beliefs affect his or her treatment. Olive and Maddry designed the course content to acquaint students with ideas about the interaction of spirituality and health. "I want students to understand that there is definitely a relationship between a patient's spiritual outlook and their medical care," Olive emphasizes.

"There is at least some scientific information that shows beneficial effects of religious beliefs on health care outcomes. We felt that those were important facts we needed to give to the students."

Though Maddry and Olive are both devout, practicing Christians, they did not design the course either to proselytize the class members or to equip them to proselytize their patients. What Olive and Maddry do want is to open up a discussion about appropriate guidelines for handling spiritual issues within the doctor/patient relationship.

Give-and-Take

What is appropriate is fairly simple. "It's almost always appropriate to explore what a patient's beliefs are and how they affect his or her medical care," says Olive. "But it's not very appropriate to make a strong attempt to push your own beliefs on a patient."

Exploring a patient's beliefs might be acceptable, but it is often not an easy thing to do, says Jeff Beiber, 26, a fourth-year medical student who participated in the class. "Feeling comfortable talking about religious issues with patients is a difficult thing to learn," he says. "When it overlaps with health care, it is very difficult to discern when to bring it up." Completing the course did help students feel more comfortable about asking. Students also learned when it is proper for a health care provider to share his or her religious views with a patient, says Rebecca Baskin-Dillehay, a fourth-year medical student who attended the class. "I don't feel that I need to put my beliefs forward unless asked," she says. "I need an invitation to share those."

Such an invitation can lead to a meaningful give-and-take about spiritual issues between the health care provider and the patient. "I've had lots of patients share complex religious issues with me, personal experiences they've had with God," Beiber says. "For instance, there was one patient who was dealing with a stroke. For him, the most important treatment was to achieve a satisfactory relationship with God before he left this world. To him, all the medical treatments were irrelevant. "

"IN A LARGE SERIES OF PATIENTS WHO HAVE CANCER, THERE IS A CERTAIN PERCENTAGE, A VERY SMALL PERCENTAGE, WHERE THE CANCER WILL JUST GO AWAY. WHAT IS THAT? IS IT A 'LOW-FREQUENCY EXPECTED MEDICAL EVENT'? OR IS IT A MIRACLE?"

Miracle or Medical Event?

Religious beliefs can influence how patients perceive their illnesses or incidents during their treatment. What seems routine to the health care provider may not be routine to the patient, Olive says. "In a large series of patients who have cancer, there is a certain percentage, a very small percentage, where the cancer will just go away. What is that? Is it a 'low-frequency expected medical event'? Or is it a miracle? If a patient wants to believe that it's a miracle, I certainly am not going to try to talk them out of it."

The issue of patients' interpreting events through a religious perspective is a very important one in health care. Olive cites one student's case study about a particular patient who had

"FOR HIM, THE MOST IMPORTANT TREATMENT WAS TO ACHIEVE A SATISFACTORY RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD BEFORE HE LEFT THIS WORLD. ALL THE MEDICAL TREATMENTS WERE IRRELEVANT."

been admitted to the hospital to have his leg amputated because of a malignant tumor. On the day he was scheduled for surgery, an emergency case came up, and his surgery was rescheduled for two days later. The second time around, the patient was sent to the operating room and sedated before the staff realized he hadn't signed a consent form. It was canceled again.

The next day, the doctor informed the man, "I've had more time to think about this case. I think we can save your leg." Eight years later, the patient still has both legs and is free of cancer. He doesn't attribute the chain of events to luck, chance, or incompetence on the part of the hospital staff. He interprets those events as divine intervention.

In the end — despite often being ignored by the medical community — spirituality, faith, belief, and other religious issues are still very important in health, Maddry says. "One's faith can be a healing agent," he says. "We should not underestimate one's spirituality and its value in recovery."

With the addition of Spiritual and Religious Issues in Clinical Care to the ETSU medical school curriculum, health care providers at long last can be given the tools to deal with a mysterious but very profound part of life. N&T

Joel Davis is a writer and journalist from the thriving metropolis of White Pine, Tenn. He is also a student intern for Now & Then. *After graduating from East Tennessee State University in December, he will be working for the* Morristown (Tenn.) Citizen Tribune.

A LINK IN A CHAIN

by Mary Rado Simpson

Father, it is in the name of Jesus that we ask right now for those that are in the hospital and have a need physically, oh God. We lift Clara up to you with her blood disorder. We speak to this blood disorder in the name of Jesus. We ask for purification of the bloodstream. Lift her up out of this bed of affliction. Restore her body and her spirit, Lord Jesus. Let her faith be linked with yours and receive that healing.

Father, God, we praise you. We speak to Phyllis' heart condition in the name of Jesus. Lord, I ask you to remove the blockage. ... Touch her this day, let her blood flow freely, remove the exhaustion and weakness from her body. We praise the Lord Jesus for he is the healer.

— Prayer as heard on WXCC-FM gospel radio program, Williamson, W.Va.

Joan Anderson put me on hold while she answered the call-waiting signal on her telephone. When she came back on the line, she instructed, "Call me back in 15 minutes. I've got an emergency prayer request to get out. There's an 11-year-old boy who just got hit by a coal truck, and he's going to be shipped out to the hospital in Huntington, W.Va."

It was a summer morning, and I had just called Anderson for a prearranged telephone interview. I was contacting her because of my interest in the issue of prayer during times of illness and crisis. As I continued to be placed on hold intermittently throughout the entire interview, I realized I was learning firsthand just how Anderson disseminates requests for spiritual help through the United Prayer Chain of the Tug Valley region in Kentucky and West Virginia.

The Tug Valley encompasses those portions of Pike County, Ky., and Mingo County, W.Va., that border on the Tug River and lie within a 15-to-20-mile driving radius of Williamson, W.Va., the region's hub. The United Prayer Chain (UPC) is a community-wide resource specializing in emergency prayer requests from people asking for spiritual assistance for themselves or others. Among other things, they ask for salvation, healing, or deliverance from bondage, the term used for distressing or troubling situations. However, since I have worked for over 10 years as a nurse in the area, I have personally been most intrigued with the healing potential of prayer for people dealing with illness.

Anderson, a member of the Church of God, initiated the interdenominational UPC in 1992. She believes that prayers "reach the throne of God" in greater force when there are links among large numbers of the faithful in a community. As Anderson explains, "It's not the church that's important. It's what is in

our hearts. People believe in God, whether they are Christian or not. Most times, when people are troubled, they want prayer. What we try to do is serve our Lord and Master seven days a week."

A homemaker most of her life and mother of one son, Anderson is a 48-year-old native of the Tug Valley region. She grew up as a member of the Pilgrim Home Freewill Baptist Church at Winco Block, W.Va. During the period from 1988 to 1991, Anderson experienced a series of personal trials which included the death of both her father and her mother in quick succession.

She recalls crying out, "God, what am I going to do now?" She believes that God provided an answer in a dream during which he told her to get back into the church. As a result, she became a member of the Chattaroy (W.Va.) Church of God.

Anderson attributes her firm faith to the Bible. "Your faith gets stronger by your reading and hearing the Word, by praying and talking to the Lord as I would talk with you, and by praising him for what has been done for me, good or bad."

Mary Rado Simpson

Prayer counselor Bonnie Gilman takes telephone prayer requests while The Gospel Lights perform live on Coal Country Sunday, WXCC-FM, Williamson, W.Va.

The UPC grew out of prayer chains found at individual churches, or "church-chains" as Anderson refers to them. A typical church chain is centered in one house of worship and has 10 to 14 members, including a prayer chain coordinator. Usually, it is a member of the congregation who gives a prayer request to a church-chain member, who then forwards the request to the rest of the members of the chain. All those involved then offer up prayer to God. Subject to God's will and to the strength of faith among those involved in the effort, a prayer request might be answered.

Nurses and other health care providers have long been aware that people turn to their faith in times of illness or crisis. Prayer

"GOD SHOWED US THAT HE WAS PLEASED WITH THE WORK OF THE PRAYER CHAIN. HE HEALED THAT CHILD."

helps people and families deal with distressing situations and symptoms, fostering a sense of well-being in the process. Anderson knows this from personal experience. Within the past year, Anderson's husband Don suffered a major heart attack right after Anderson herself had been discharged from the hospital. Upon learning that her husband needed heart bypass surgery, Anderson immediately turned to her pastor and prayer for support. Says Anderson, "Prayer helped to calm me down. There was no way I could have handled that whole situation without God."

Prayers offered on behalf of another, sometimes called petitionary or intercessory prayer, is certainly not unique to Appalachia. For example, informal prayer requests within worship services are honored in a variety of Judeo-Christian denominations. Church chains, a more formalized structure for intercessory prayer, are found primarily in Protestant denominations across the country.

What is distinctive about the Tug Valley UPC is how a community of believers has shaped and nurtured this diverse "band of Christians in the name of Jesus." The UPC has given the Tug Valley a network of open care, concern, and support for those who turn to religion during times of distress. The network offers united prayer, grounded in faith, that healing may occur for those in need.

Healing, as viewed by believers, depends upon an inextricable link of the physical, the spiritual, and the mental. To be healed, it must be emphasized, is not necessarily synonymous with being cured physically. In fact, a loved one's critical illness may generate requests that the sufferer be saved, or "get right with the Lord," before he or she dies. As Anderson notes, "God has reasons why the physical body isn't always healed. The healing may be that God takes you home when you die. Your family can gain strength and healing too, knowing that you went to heaven."

Forging Links

The community-wide UPC had its beginnings when Anderson's pastor appointed her as church-chain coordinator at the Church of God in Chattaroy, W.Va., a community just outside of Williamson. While talking with her friend, Faye Price, who was also a chain coordinator at the nearby Bethel Temple Assembly of God in Borderland, W.Va., Anderson asked her, "Why don't we just call each other when we get a request? Then, between our two churches, there will be more people praying."

Anderson's husband, Don, provided assistance. The founder

Mary Rado Simpson

The tools of the prayer chain network: a Bible, a telephone, and a routing slip.

of the live Sunday gospel program on WXCC-FM Coal Country Radio in Williamson, he would talk about how the two churches were united in prayer. Radio listeners responded positively and began giving testimony to the power of prayer in their own lives. Soon afterwards, call-in prayer requests became a major part of the Sunday broadcast. Anderson then selected the most urgent call-in requests — such as those asking for prayers for people suffering from cancer, from heart attacks, or those in danger of dying without having been saved. These serious requests would not only be prayed for at the radio station, but Anderson would also pass them on to the Bethel Temple Assembly of God/Chattaroy Church of God prayer chain. During the program, Don Anderson would ask that all those at the radio station kneel and hold hands while a guest preacher led the listening audience in group prayer.

A major turning point in Anderson's work occurred when Ray Leedy, an Octavia, Ky., Freewill Baptist deacon, called in an urgent prayer request for his 18-month-old grandson who had been diagnosed with cystic fibrosis and "ear problems." The grandson had already been placed on his church's prayer list and anointed for healing at the pastor's home. The next day, the boy was to undergo further medical tests at a regional medical center.

Anderson agreed that the situation was urgent, and through united prayer, the Bethel/Chattaroy church chain sought to "hold this boy's needs up to the Lord." After medical tests were completed, Leedy's family was elated when the doctors said that the boy did not have cystic fibrosis and gave him a clean bill of health. Convinced of the healing power of prayer, Leedy went back to his Freewill Baptist congregation and asked that their church join the UPC. The congregation agreed. As Anderson remarks, "God showed us that he was pleased with the work of the prayer chain. He healed that child."

From that point, as different ministers or pastors were guests on the gospel program, Anderson would talk to them about joining the UPC. Anderson laughs when she recalls these early years of the UPC. "Here I was, having to talk on the radio and in front of ministers. I was so nervous — you know, pastors are in charge of God's people. Even when I took a speech class at the community college, my knuckles would get white, and I would grab onto the table when I gave my speech. But the Lord built my strength and confidence. I started to enjoy getting out in front of others. I was on fire for the Lord's work!"

It's God's Work

The UPC has grown to include an interdenominational network of 14 church chains. Among UPC members, there is a strong consensus that the idea of different churches working together in the Tug Valley would never had been thought possible five years ago. As UPC co-founder Price explains, "It used to be that in this area, there were many walls between the denominations. The direction of church really depends on your pastor, and by working with these pastors and bringing people together through the UPC for the work of Jesus, some of these walls have broken down." Anderson echoes this belief when she gives "God the credit and glory for bringing these churches together."

As Anderson moves a prayer request through the UPC network, it is apparent that she not only has intimate knowledge of activities in the Tug Valley, but also possesses an array of organizational and decision-making skills.

Take the situation of the 11-year-old boy injured by a coal truck. First, a church member at the emergency room of a local hospital relayed to Anderson a prayer request for healing from the boy's parents. Next, Anderson called three church-chain coordinators, who in turn spread the request through the remaining linked chains. Anderson makes these initial calls according to a practical, highly efficient system she has devised.

"IT'S NOT THE CHURCH THAT'S IMPORTANT. IT'S WHAT IS IN OUR HEARTS. PEOPLE BELIEVE IN GOD, WHETHER THEY ARE CHRISTIAN OR NOT."

It is a system based upon her always knowing who the available contacts are at the time when a request comes in; she has also designed it so that no one ever makes a long distance call in order to relay a request. Within the hour, Anderson stands ready to accept return calls from each church-chain coordinator, verifying the information about the prayer request, information such as the ill person's name and symptoms. As UPC coordinator, Anderson also oversees monthly UPC business meetings, orients

new UPC members to guidelines for handling prayer requests, and stays sensitive to the amount of time members contribute.

The prayer chain's efforts seemed to have been rewarded. Except for broken bones, the little boy was not seriously injured.

Why has Anderson taken on this time-consuming work? She explains, "It's God's work, and it's what I was meant to do. God puts it on your heart. I can't stand to see so many sick — with cancer and bad hearts."

Prayer, Health, and Healing

Healing includes nonmedical interventions that seek to reduce the impact of an illness on a person's physical, mental, social, and spiritual life. For people of faith, religion provides a meaningful way to deal with health-related crises. However, as Leedy emphasizes, "I want to be sure you know that prayer is not taking the place of the doctor. It's just an extension. Doctors do all they can do. Then it's put in the hands of the Lord." Many others in the UPC echo this same sentiment.

It is my opinion that health care providers must recognize a person's beliefs about healing and incorporate those beliefs into the individual's total health care. Too often in our country, a narrow focus on cure de-emphasizes the broader, interrelated elements of care and healing. Anderson sums it up by saying, "Your faith is tested by troubles such as illness. The faith of all those people praying and lifting you up to God — well, you feel the Lord in you, and you know that whatever happens, you will be healed — if not on this earth, then in the by-and-by." N&T

Mary Rado Simpson is a Ph.D. candidate in nursing and a research assistant at the University of Kentucky, Lexington. Simpson's interest in religion grew out of her nursing experiences at the South Williamson, Ky., Appalachian Regional Hospital. She now resides in Hardy, Ky.

Rhapsody

When trumpets untune the sky,
we'll all gush up like geysers,
tumbling over each other in our haste.
Mouths open, we'll gasp like fish
for the bread that will pull us to heaven.
We'll wait in line
with wafers like tickets on our tongues.

When serpent-tailed horses gallop,
pieces of people will fly back to their owners —
docking at first in the wrong places: arm stumps
will sprout ears; fingers will roll their new eyes.
Orphan parts will panic, looking for the perfect fit.

But when at last the hills are level,
and the fires have sputtered and died down,
a light will rise from the forests;
from the oceans a strange singing will sound.
Our mouths will taste a new music,
and all of our senses will be one.
The universe will shine.
It will blaze forever
in one bright burning,
in one dazzling, deafening chord.

— Edwina Pendarvis

E. D. Pendarvis lives in Huntington, W.Va., and teaches at Marshall University. Her work has appeared in Antietam Review, Appalachian Journal, Grab-A-Nickle, Small Pond, Tantra, Wind Magazine, *and other journals. Pendarvis won first place for her poetry collection* Coruscations *at the 1995 Cedar Lakes Writers Conference in West Virginia.*

ETSU

News CASS

Newsletter of the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services • East Tennessee State University

Archives & Special Collections
A Division of Sherrod Library

CARROLL REECE MUSEUM

INSIDE: Winter 1996-97

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QUILLEN CONGRESSIONAL PAPERS DONATED TO ARCHIVES

Retiring Congressman **James H. "Jimmy" Quillen** of Kingsport has donated the papers and memorabilia from his long and active political career to Archives and Special Collections.

Representing the 1st Congressional District of Tennessee since 1963, Quillen is retiring as the senior member of the state's congressional delegation at the end of his present term in January 1997. The papers, which include correspondence, government documents, project files, photographs, and scrapbooks help document Quillen's contributions to the district and the Appalachian region, as well as the area's political and social development in the last third of the 20th century.

"Congressman Quillen and his staff in Kingsport, Tenn., and in Washington are to be commended for so carefully keeping and organizing these papers over the years," says Norma Myers, archives head. "Because of this effort, the papers tell not only the story of Congressman Quillen's career but also hold much information about development in Tennessee's 1st Congressional District." Myers and Stephen Patrick, Sherrod Library's government documents librarian, have been

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Photo courtesy of University Relations, ETSU

From left to right, ETSU President Dr. Roy S. Nicks greets Congressman James H. "Jimmy" Quillen in a recent campus visit.

SCOTTISH STUDIES EXPANDS TO INCLUDE IRISH HERITAGE

The Appalachian-Scottish Studies Program at East Tennessee State University (ETSU), known by that name since 1988, has been rechristened **Appalachian-Scottish & Irish Studies**. This name change in no way diminshes the emphasis on Scottish culture that has made this one of the premier programs of its type in the country.

What the name change does signify is our growing commitment to the Irish portion of the Scotch-Irish heritage of Appalachia. It is merely a growth ring on the tree of success. The inclusion of Irish studies will only add to the overall program's dimension and enlarge the scope of the cultural quest on which we are embarked.

The dates for the **summer 1997 class**, which will take the program back to Scotland and Ireland, have been set. The current plan is to leave the U.S. on July 12 and

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Scottish Studies, continued from page 1

return on August 3. We will once again make the University of Edinburgh our home base in addition to taking a trip to Ireland in the middle of the three-week stay.

There will be a 40-person limit. With the interest that has already been shown, we anticipate that the class will fill up rather fast. A deposit sent in after January 1, 1997 will reserve a spot in the class on a first-come basis. (Please note that we will not be taking deposits prior to January 1st.) Once we have received 40 deposits, we will place any other interested persons on a waiting list. There will be an attempt to achieve parity between traditional and nontraditional students.

For more information, contact **Stevan Jackson** at Appalachian-Scottish & Irish Studies, Box 70556, ETSU, Johnson City, TN 37614 or call 423-439-4498. The e-mail address is jacksons@etsuvax.east-tenn-st.edu. ◆

NewsCASS, the joint newsletter of the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services, Archives and Special Collections, and the Reece Museum, East Tennessee State University, is published three times a year. Center and Reece Museum members receive *NewsCASS* as part of the benefits of membership.

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CENTER HOMEPAGE PLANNED

Work is progressing on a homepage for the center, which will have information regarding the various center programs, including the Appalachian Studies minor, Appalachian-Scottish & Irish Studies, the Bluegrass Program, *Now & Then*, and the Reece Museum. There will also be links with the archives homepage and those of the university. Be on the lookout, the homepage should be up and running soon. ◆

ARCHIVES
CHANGES & ADDITIONS

* **Linda Akard** has joined Archives and Special Collections as temporary technical services archivist for 1996-97. Linda had previously been an interim cataloger in Sherrod Library's Technical Services division. She will be focusing on cataloging the archives' manuscript holdings into the OCLC (Online Computer Library Center) database. She replaces Dr. Marie Tedesco, who is on non-instructional assignment until September 1997.

* In addition to adjusting to a new telephone area code, readers should be aware of a new university-wide telephone prefix (439) and a change in the archives homepage. The new phone numbers for CASS, Archives and Special Collections, and the Reece Museum are given on the back page of this newsletter. The new Internet address for the homepage is as follows: **http://www.etsu-tn.edu/~sfs1:archapp** ◆

Quillen Papers, continued from page 1

working closely with Congressman Quillen and his staff in arranging the collection's transfer to the ETSU campus.

Born in Wayland, Va., in 1916, Quillen grew up in Kingsport, where he became a successful newspaper publisher and businessman before beginning a political career. He served in the Tennessee General Assembly from 1955-62 before running for Congress in 1962. During his congressional career he was an influential member of the House Rules Committee and the Republican leadership. Noted for his work on behalf of constituents, Quillen's career was perhaps highlighted by his work in helping secure a medical school for ETSU, appropriately known today as the **Quillen College of Medicine**.

A replica of Quillen's congressional office will be housed in the new university library, soon to be under construction. The Quillen papers help the archives provide research materials for examining 20th century political life in upper East Tennessee. ◆

ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PARTICIPATING IN "MONTICELLO" LIBRARY PROJECT

The Archives of Appalachia has been selected to participate in the **"Monticello Electronic Library"** pilot project, a demonstration project whose purpose is to serve as a model for providing uniform access to collections in repositories in the Southeast.

The project is sponsored by the **Southeastern Library Network** (SOLINET) in partnership with the Southern Growth Policies Board (SGPB), the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), and the Southeastern Universities Research Association (SURA) with a grant from the United States Department of Commerce National Telecommunications and Information Administration. An outcome of the project will be a decentralized online information system for the region.

"It is exciting to be a part of this important project," comments **Norma Myers**, archives head. "The Monticello Project will enable the staff of the Archives of Appalachia to take the first steps toward providing Internet access to the many collections housed here."

Initially, the archives will be providing information from selected manuscript collection finding aids. Data will be provided to SOLINET electronically, linked with that of other participants, and eventually made accessible on the World Wide Web.

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STUDENT INTERNS HELP SUSTAIN CENTER PROGRAMS

Now & Then magazine has offered internship opportunities to a number of East Tennessee State University undergraduates over the past several years. Here are profiles of our two most recent interns.

Meredith Scarbrough

"I didn't even know that *Now & Then* offered internships," says 22-year-old **Meredith Scarbrough**, a recent East Tennessee State University (ETSU) graduate. Fortunately for Scarbrough— and for *Now & Then* — ETSU faculty member Jack Mooney suggested that she consider an internship with the magazine.

Meredith Scarbrough

The Oakdale, Tenn., native worked at the center office last summer on the "Appalachian Visions" issue of the magazine, contributing an article on the Blacksburg (Va.) Electronic Village, editing, and helping with desktop publishing chores. "It's easy to get writing skills in the journalism program. And with a lot of internships, you don't get to do anything but write," she notes. "My ***Now & Then*** internship experience really helped because I got to do a little bit of everything, to put together the whole package." A quick study, the ETSU senior worked beyond her 15-hour-a-week internship commitment when editor Jane Harris Woodside was forced to take family medical leave just a week before the magazine was to go to the printer.

Scarbrough started her ETSU career as a nursing major with a minor in journalism, but when she got her first taste of real-world nursing during her clinical courses, she made a dismaying discovery. "I hated it — absolutely, positively hated it. I liked the course work, but when you're actually working in a hospital, there is a lot of paperwork. You

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REECE MUSEUM

FRIENDS SUPPORT ART SCHOLARSHIP

At its September meeting, the Friends of the Reece Museum board of directors approved a plan for additional funding of the **FORM Art Scholarship**. The board decided that half of its membership receipts for the next three calendar years would be earmarked for the FORM Scholarship, providing approximately $2000 each year for building the endowment. In addition, FORM will continue plans for special fundraising events and accept contributions of any size from interested individuals and corporations. If you would like to contribute to the FORM Scholarship, please mail your check made payable to "FORM Scholarship" to the Reece Museum, Box 70660, ETSU, Johnson City, TN 37614-0660. ◆

A view of the "Gifts" Exhibit as installed at Folk Art Center in Asheville, N. C.

REECE MUSEUM

APPALACHIAN ART SERIES INAUGURATED

Two exhibits will inaugurate a new exhibition series scheduled to begin in January at the Reece. The Appalachian Art Series is planned to highlight Appalachian artists or exhibits focused on the Appalachian region.

"Appalachian and Coastal Paintings and Drawings" features the works of Chattanooga artist **George Cress**, professor and chairman emeritus of the Department of Art at the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga. Cress recently exhibited his "Coastal Patterns" series at the Hunter Museum of Art in Chattanooga. A large portion of these works were sold, with two paintings going to the Georgia Museum of Art. Cress will be at ETSU and the museum on **January 16**, when he will present an afternoon slide lecture in the Department of Art and Design and be honored at an early evening reception at the Reece.

Showing concurrently will be the textile exhibit "Gifts," from the **Southern Highland Craft Guild** located in Asheville, N.C. This collection of works is based on the unpublished weaving drafts of **Frances L. Goodrich**. Goodrich performed missionary work in Western North Carolina during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and was introduced to the weaver's art when she was presented with a handwoven coverlet given as a "gift." Goodrich began to collect draft patterns and worked with the women of the region to market their woven handicrafts.

These exhibits, along with the permanent collection exhibits of historic artifacts and selections from the art collection, will be on display at the museum through February 23. ◆

Friends of the Reece Museum (FORM)

supports the mission of the Reece Museum through monetary contributions as well as through the volunteer services of its members. FORM funds acquisitions for museum collections, improvements to facilities, public receptions and lectures, and art scholarships. FORM volunteers assist in museum education programs.

FORM members receive museum and CASS publications, a membership card, discounts on FORM-sponsored events, and preferred seating at FORM-sponsored lectures and public forums.

☐ FORM Student	$5
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Please make checks payable to FORM and mail to Reece Museum, ETSU Box 70660, Johnson City, TN 37614-0660.

TIDBITS

Photographs from collections in Archives and Special Collections have recently been used in an exhibit at the Museum of East Tennessee in Knoxville; in an upcoming issue of ***Guideposts*** magazine; and are included in a permanent exhibit as part of the "Thunder Road" amusement ride at Dollywood in Pigeon Forge, Tenn. ◆

REECE MUSEUM

HARVEY DEAN, FORMER DIRECTOR, REMEMBERED

The museum was saddened to learn of the passing of former director **Harvey A. Dean** on June 15, 1996. Before coming to the Reece Museum in 1972, Dean served as director of the Evansville (Ind.) Museum of Arts and Sciences.

Dean graduated from Valparaiso (Ind.) University and did post-graduate work at Evansville University and New York State Historical Society's Summer Seminars in museum displays and history restoration. Dean served as a visiting lecturer at the University of Alabama Medical School at Birmingham and was a former assistant editor and short articles editor of *World Book Encyclopedia*.

continued on page 11

Harvey Dean and ETSU moving crew unloading Washington hand press, 1979.

BLUEGRASS PROGRAM

CENTER HOSTS CZECH BLUEGRASS MUSICIANS

The Center for Appalachian Studies and Services and East Tennessee State University's (ETSU) music department hosted 14 bluegrass musicians and enthusiasts from the Czech Republic.

Enroute to Owensboro, Ky., for the International Bluegrass Music Association's annual conference, trade show, and festival, the group toured ETSU's campus, including the Center, the Reece Museum, and the Archives of Appalachia. ETSU Bluegrass and Country Music Program Director **Jack Tottle** also arranged for them to tour the A. P. Carter Family Museum in nearby Hiltons, Va., where they met and traded songs with Janette Carter, daughter of country music pioneers A. P. and Sara Carter.

During their Johnson City sojourn, the visitors performed their own brand of Czech bluegrass, sung entirely in Czech, together with the ETSU Senior Bluegrass Band at the acoustic listening room, the Down Home. The Czech musicians were extremely well-received by a nearly full house of delighted spectators. Afterwards, tables were moved aside, and the Czechs joined in an informal bluegrass jam session of some two dozen musicians, most of them students in the ETSU Bluegrass and Country Music Program. ◆

POETRY EDITOR WINS TENNESSEE CONTEST

Now & Then poetry editor **Linda Parsons** of Knoxville, Tenn., won first prize in the 1996 **Tennessee Writers Alliance (TWA) poetry contest** for "The Lost Child." The Tennessee Arts Commission (TAC) also recently granted her an honorable mention in the competition for the 1996 Literary Fellowship.

In the TWA contest, Parsons faced stiff opposition. Not only were there more than 400 entries, but Appalachian poet and writer Marilou Awiakta who served as final judge, reports, "The overall quality of the submissions was unusually high. There's no doubt that poetry is alive and well in Tennessee." Parson's poem was chosen as the best out of a number of worthy contenders, says Awiakta, because "it had an extraordinary unity of image, thought, emotion, and form."

Parsons reports that the poem was written for her youngest daughter, Rachel, after a beach trip. "It's about the old tug of letting your children go off into the world — with them pulling one way, memory and love pulling the other," says the poet.

She received her award and a $500 first prize in October during ceremonies at the Southern Festival of Books in Nashville, Tenn.

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ARCHIVES

SELECTED RECENT ACQUISITIONS

THOMAS BURTON COLLECTION

1978-92. 1 ft. and 29 audio recordings. Addition.

Contains audio recordings, dub sheets, transcripts of recordings, correspondence, certificates, research papers, and photographic images. The material focuses on Scottish and Appalachian folk music and folklore, Appalachian folk practices and speech, and serpent handling in religious services. Donated by Dr. Thomas Burton, Department of English, ETSU.

BENJAMIN J. CRAMER COLLECTION

1996. 1 folder, 1 audio cassette, and 8 prints.

Consists of a research paper on the history of the Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio Railway and of the experiences of Jack Hawkins, who worked for the railroad for 40 years. Includes a taped interview with Hawkins and photographs of Lost Cove in Yancey, Co., N. C. Donated by Benjamin J. Cramer, Johnson City.

JOE JENNINGS PAPERS

1962-67 and undated. 1.5 ft. Addition.

Consists of material related to Joe and Aubrey Jennings' unpublished manuscript, "History of Indian Education." Includes chapter drafts, finished chapters, and clippings. Donated by Jean Jennings O'Brien, Stockbridge, Ga.

OFFICE OF THE BURSAR RECORDS

1915-50. 13 ft.

Consists of records originating in the ETSU bursar's office and includes contracts, correspondence, financial ledgers, and memorabilia documenting the financial operation of the school.

ROTARCT CLUB RECORDS

1996. 1 folder.

Consists of a file of materials related to the organization of this club at ETSU. Donated by Peggy Cunningham, ETSU.

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH RECORDS

1939-94. 5 ft. Addition.

Includes church bulletins, journals, leaflets, legal and administrative records, tax records, materials on the history of the parish, activities of women in the church, youth activities and education, scrapbooks, and an oversized map showing the location of Episcopal households in Johnson City. Donated by Harriet Cone on behalf of the church.

WCYB-TV COLLECTION

1994-1996. 8 videotapes. Addition.

Eight video recordings of Greg Wallace's "Appalachian Interviews" featuring individuals and groups of regional interest. The recordings focus on regional music, storytelling, early aviation, crafts, and folk life. Donated by Greg Wallace, WCYB-TV, Bristol, Va.

WEATHER BUREAU AIRPORT STATION REPORTS

1948-89. 20 ft.

Consists of surface weather observations made by the Weather Bureau Airport Station, Tri-City Airport, Blountville, Tenn. Donated by Tom Porter on behalf of the National Weather Service.

KATHLEEN WILSON COLLECTION

1973. 5 audio recordings.

Consists of copies of five audio cassette recordings of an interview by Ralph Rinzler with Appalachian weaver Taft Greer. Original recordings are owned by the Smithsonian Institution. Donated by Kathleen Wilson, Asheville, N. C.

The archives thanks the following for donations of materials recently: Rose Kemmer Anderson, Margaret Carr, Katie Doman, William R. Gann, Sylvia Gaylor, Dr. Gerald Gehre, Jon Hall, Stevan Jackson, Ann Cable Johnson, John Kiener, Polly King, Katie Libby, Ambrose N. Manning, Charles Moore, Wayne S. Rial, Shane A. Smith, Al L. Vreeland, and Jane Harris Woodside. ◆

Archives and Special Collections

Members are invited to make donations of materials having historical and cultural significance for Southern Appalachia and its people, as well as financial contributions to the Archives of Appalachia Fund and to the Tom Daniels Memorial Fund (for archives media projects). For further information, phone (423) 439-4338 or write Archives and Special Collections, at the address below.

❑ Archives of Appalachia Fund Amount _____

❑ Tom Daniels Memorial Fund Amount _____

Name_____

Address_____

City/State/ZIP_____

Please make checks payable to the specific fund named and mail to Archives and Special Collections, ETSU Box 70665, Johnson City, TN 37614-0665.

REECE MUSEUM

MEMORY TREE DISPLAY HOSTED

For a number of years, visitors to the Reece Museum during the holiday season have been enchanted with the **Poinsettia Memory Tree**, standing in scarlet glory in our Music Gallery. Each of the 200 living poinsettia plants that makes up the "tree" was purchased by individuals either as a memorial to friends and family who are no longer with us or as a thank you to those persons who make our lives brighter by their presence. Names of persons honored as well as the names of accompanying donors are inscribed on a document displayed next to the tree. For a definite day-brightener, please be sure to see the Poinsettia Memory Tree when you visit the museum during the holiday exhibit, "In Miniature," on display through December 22. ◆

BLUEGRASS PROGRAM

ETSU MUSICAL EXCELLENCE HONORED WITH AWARDS

On September 26, the International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) presented its 1996 Bluegrass Awards in Owensboro, Ky. For the first time, the winners included four ETSU alumni and faculty members.

Album of the Year went to *It's a Long, Long Road* (Rebel Records) by **Blue Highway,** winning out over albums by such long-established favorites as the Lonesome River Band, Ronnie and Rob McCoury, and the Nashville Bluegrass Band. Blue Highway was organized by ETSU alumnus and current faculty member **Tim Stafford.** Bluegrass and Country Music Program Director Jack Tottle wrote the title song and liner notes for *It's a Long, Long Road.*

Blue Highway also won Emerging Artist of the Year, an award which recognizes recent entrants to the field who display exceptional promise. Never before has the Emerging Artist winner also won Album of the Year. In another coup for Blue Highway, the group's brilliant young dobro player, **Rob Ickes**, broke superpicker Jerry Douglas' six-year lock on the Dobro Player of the Year award.

Recorded Event of the Year was presented to *Bluegrass 95* (Pinecastle Records), an album featuring ETSU alumni **Adam Steffey** on mandolin and **Barry Bales** on bass. This category is reserved for recordings by musicians who do not ordinarily perform together. Others on the recording include Scott Vestal (who tied for Banjo Player of the Year with Sammy Shelor), Aubrey Haynie, Wayne Benson, and Clay Jones.

Country and bluegrass superstar Ricky Skaggs hosted the awards ceremony, which was broadcast by 350 radio stations worldwide and by the Voice of America. ◆

PHOTO CONTEST DEADLINE NEARS

Now & Then magazine and the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services at East Tennessee State University announce the **1997 A Fresh Look at Appalachia Photography Contest**. Open to both amateur and professional photographers, the contest is looking for color or black-and-white photographs that present non-stereotypical images of life in contemporary Appalachia.

The contest is using a very inclusive working definition of the region; Appalachia is the area stretching along the Appalachian mountain chain from southern New York state to northern Mississippi, Alabama, and

continued on page 11

NOW & THEN SEEKS SUBMISSIONS FOR 1997

Now & Then is seeking submissions for the summer 1997 Appalachian Photography issue and the winter 1997 issue on Northern Appalachia.

Photographers, both professional and amateur, are encouraged to submit good quality black-and-white or color photographs portraying life up and down the Appalachian mountain chain, from southern New York state to northern Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia. "In our **Appalachian Photography** issue, we're also open to articles, essays, or interviews about photographers and photography, about how this art form has shaped and been shaped by people's perceptions of Appalachia, for good or ill," says *Now & Then* editor Jane Harris Woodside. As always, poets and fiction writers should submit work that relates in some way to the theme.

The issue will also include winners of the 1997 A Fresh Look at Appalachia Photography Contest. **March 1, 1997** is the deadline for the Appalachian Photography issue. Entries for the contest must be postmarked no later than **March 15.**

In the winter of 1997, *Now & Then's* **The Other Appalachia** issue will focus on the Northern part of the Appalachian region. "People often lose sight of the fact that the Appalachian Regional Commission's definition of the region extends all the way past West Virginia up through Maryland, Pennsylvania, and into southern New York," notes Woodside. "Right now, there are scholars and activists trying to establish Northern Appalachian Studies programs and organizations. It seems like a good time to take a hard look at our Northern cousins." **The deadline for the Northern Appalachia issue will be July 1, 1997.**

Now & Then is published by the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services at East Tennessee State University. Each issue examines a facet of life in Appalachia. Articles and fiction should not exceed 3,000 words; book reviews should be no more than 750 words. If a self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed, work will be returned.

Send submissions and written queries to *Now & Then*, East Tennessee State University, Box 70556, Johnson City TN 37614-0556, or call 423-439-5348, or send e-mail to woodsidj@etsu.etsu-tn.edu. A sample copy of the magazine is available for $4.50. ◆

Student interns, continued from page 3

don't have a lot of control over what you do."

An avid reader who had written stories ever since childhood, Scarbrough decided to make her minor her major. After having worked as news editor for the ***East Tennessean*** and 1996 ***Buccaneer*** yearbook editor, she graduated in December with a mass communications degree.

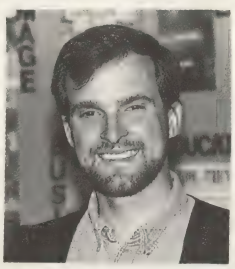
What would she like to be doing in 20 years? "Hmm. I'm trying to decide between working for *Cosmopolitan* and *Newsweek*," she laughs. "Maybe I'd like to be just the science editor for *Newsweek*. But I definitely wouldn't mind being editor-in-chief of *Cosmopolitan*. I do want to work for a magazine eventually. You get more of a chance to be creative."

Joel Davis

Around the Center office, 25-year-old journalism intern **Joel Davis** is known as a hardworking writer who possesses a dry, self-deprecating wit and unbelievably bad handwriting.

"Around my junior year of high school, an English teacher actually sat down and managed to fight her way through my handwriting and read something I'd written," the White Pine, Tenn., native recalls. "Much to her — and my — surprise, she discovered I actually had a talent for writing. So she advised me either to improve my handwriting or learn to type." He opted for typing. "Word processors are my friends," says Davis.

Davis began at the center as a work-study student during the spring semester of 1996, writing "Swapping Stories" on the Hidden Heroines of Northeast Tennessee oral history project and helping with general editorial duties for *Now & Then's* "Conserving Appalachia" issue. After spending the summer working for the *Morristown Citizen Tribune* in Morristown, Tenn., the ETSU senior returned to the center for his last semester, working 15 hours a week as both a journalism intern and a work-study student.



JOEL DAVIS

Working for the Center and magazine meant working "with all sorts of strange and wonderful people," says Davis. "Working here makes me wish that I had seriously thought about doing the Appalachian Studies minor when I had the chance. As I get older — though I realize at 25 that's a relative term — I've realized how important my culture is to me."

Davis, who graduated in December with a bachelor's degree in mass communications, is attracted to either newspaper or magazine work. "I'm not that picky," he explains. "If I can write and nobody yells at me, I'm happy."

He combined being a full-time student with working about 20 hours a week at various part-time jobs and doing freelance writing assignments. Davis was awarded the Richard Cobb Miller Scholarship, given to journalism students who distinguish themselves both in the classroom and in their extracurricular activities.

Davis mulls over what life will be like now that he's graduated. "They've told me that the real world is going to be hard. All I can say is it can't be any worse than what I've done while going to school. It will be a luxury to do just one thing." ◆

Memberships in the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services

MEMBERSHIPS GIVE YOU NOW & THEN AND MUCH MORE

Membership in the Center provides public recognition of your generosity and your support for our work in the Appalachian region. No matter what size the investment, a contribution to the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services through membership brings important returns. Your benefits of membership are:

- Members receive three issues of the Center's magazine, ***Now & Then***, to keep you abreast of Appalachian issues and the best in Appalachian writing and photography.
- Members receive the Center's newsletter, ***NewsCASS***, three times a year. Members are publicly acknowledged in the newsletter once each year.
- Members receive special member rates and discounts on books, recordings, and other publications or productions, study tours, study abroad, conferences, and programs.

In addition, your membership provides the Center with these benefits:

- Memberships help us conduct the Center's multiple programs and projects in teaching, research, and service in the Appalachian region.
- Members have opportunities for participating in Center projects as volunteers.

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Donations in excess of $15 may be tax deductible.

Friends of the Center are also encouraged to support specific programs with special funds already established for them.

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News/CASS/Wi96

Monticello Project, continued from page 3

The archives was one of only 22 repositories/ information providers chosen to participate from throughout the Southeast United States. Other participants will be Auburn University, Collier County (Fla.) Public Library, Duke University, Eastern Kentucky University, Emory University, Florida IRC/UF, Nashville (Tenn.) Public Library, North Carolina Office of State Planning, Northwest Louisiana State University, South Carolina Office of Information Resources, Southern Growth Policies Board, State Library of Florida, U. S. Department of Energy, University of Alabama, University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Kentucky, University of North Carolina, University of South Florida, University of Virginia, and the University of Virginia Social Science Data Center. ◆

Harvey Dean, continued from page 5

At the Reece, he implemented many outstanding programs such as a FORM-sponsored concert series, an annual art tour of museums in Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and Baltimore, and classes for the general public taught by area artists. During his tenure, a docent program as well as the Deborah Jean Brightly Scholarship (now known as the FORM Art Scholarship) were established. Mr. Dean led the museum through its first accreditation process in 1972 and guided the Reece Museum toward its current distinction of being one of only 12 museums in the state of Tennessee which are accredited by the American Association of Museums.

Dean was quoted in a 1978 *East Tennessean* article:

> *"Museums exist to help preserve these valuable and sometimes irreplacable objects of historical interest and to provide a place for the exhibition and sustaining of the arts."*

Dean retired from the Reece Museum in 1980 and spent his retirement years in Jonesborough. He is survived by his wife Doris, and a daughter, Keri L. Smith. The Dean family graciously designated that memorial contributions could be made to Reece Museum. ◆

Poetry award, continued from page 5

Parsons was also singled out by distinguished poet Elizabeth Spires for an honorable mention in the **1996 TAC Literary Fellowship competition.** "It was almost too close to call," reports the TAC's literary arts director Alice Swanson. "Parsons is very good." The *Now & Then* poetry editor received a $1,000 cash award. ◆

REECE MUSEUM

DISCOVERY TOUR PROVES A SUCCESS

Friends of the Reece Museum sponsored another successful Discovery Tour in August. The museum's Discovery Tours give those who appreciate fine art exhibits and other cultural events a chance to travel and "discover" together. On August 23, 40 participants travelled to the **Greenville County Museum of Art** in Greenville, S. C. to view the exhibit, **"Andrew Wyeth: America's Painter."** This exhibit featured nearly 50 works of art, most of which had never before been on public display.

The day included lunch in the museum's galleries and a stop at **Bob Jones University**, whose art gallery houses an internationally known collection of religious art. Visitors viewed works by such artists as Rembrandt, Titian, and Botticelli, along with Russian icons and excavated artifacts from the Holy Land ◆

Contest, continued from page 7

Georgia.

"One of the center's primary missions is to dispel widespread myths about the region and its people," explains Jane Harris Woodside, *Now & Then's* editor. Often photographs perpetuate misperceptions of the Appalachian region. "Visual images tend towards the nostalgic or the grim," comments *Now & Then* managing editor, Nancy Fischman. "They present the region as a place where a romanticized American frontier past still lingers on or as a bleak, impoverished part of the country, populated by gaunt, backward people." The contest hopes to inspire photographers to produce photographs that capture modern Appalachia in all its diversity and complexity.

Judges for the contest are Tim Barnwell and Kathleen M. H. Ewing. Barnwell is a well-known Asheville, N.C., professional photographer, who has been published in *Time* and *Newsweek*. Ewing is owner/director of the Kathleen Ewing Gallery in Washington, D. C., and the current president of the Association of International Photography Art Dealers. The gallery represents over 30 contemporary photographers.

Winners will receive cash prizes. Winning entries will be printed in the summer 1997 Appalachian Photography issue of *Now & Then* and featured in a fall 1997 exhibition at the Center's Reece Museum.

Entries must be postmarked by March 15, 1997. To obtain complete guidelines, write Photography Contest, CASS/ETSU, Box 70556, Johnson City TN 37614-0556, call 423-439-5348 or send e-mail to woodsidj@etsu.etsu-tn.edu. ◆

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Newsletter of the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services / East Tennessee State University

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IN MEMORIAM

The Center for Appalachian Studies and Services notes with sadness the loss of three important contributors to Appalachian life and culture in the past few months. The "Father of Bluegrass Music," **Bill Monroe**, left a legacy of incalculable proportion to the music heritage of our region and the world. We see his legacy live on in the eager young students in our bluegrass music program here at ETSU, and we remember with fondness Monroe's visit with us last year. Our good friend, **Jim Wayne Miller**, left us some of the finest words ever written about the Appalachian experience. Like the Brier he created, Jim Wayne spoke words of wisdom and prophesy that continue to guide us. In our local area, the warm and witty storytelling voice of **Malone Young** is now silenced, but we have his stories and his love of Appalachian speech recorded in his *Latchpins of the Lost Cove* and other writings. Appalachia has lost three of its finest, but their voices live on.

— Jean Haskell Speer, Director

CENTER FOR Appalachian STUDIES AND SERVICES

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East Tennessee State University
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Funeral

by Jerry Richardson

I'm pretty sure my father was dead. I mean, there we were at the funeral home, consoling and being consoled, and there he was in the casket, looking better than he had in years. Looking back on it, though, I don't think Dad was exactly dead. I think he was more like partially dead.

My father was Randall Carter, born in 1910 in Southwest Virginia. He started working in the coal mines at thirteen after his father was crushed in a rock fall. He retired when he was sixty-two, lived for another seventeen years, and sort of died on February 12th, 1990. Like I said, though, I'm pretty sure he hung around a few more days, getting things the way he wanted them before he headed out.

Dad was handsome and well-built. He was right at six feet tall, slim and quick, with powerful arms. He had strong, patrician features and intense blue eyes, which were quick to anger and quicker to laugh. His hair was plentiful and had been silver-grey for years. He told me it changed color after he had washed paint out of his hair with a bottle of Clorox. My mother vouches for this story, but then again, she and Dad were married for almost fifty-five years and worked closely together.

Dad noticed everything and found laughter in almost all of it. He preferred situational humor, and if nothing was going on naturally, he would take some time to help it along. This is why I believe he was only partially dead. He wanted one more crack at things.

Religion had not been my father's main interest. I know he went to church when he was a young man because that was the only place to meet girls. He read the Bible, but I believe this was primarily for the history and adventure. He knew a good deal about the women in the Bible and seemed to have a particular fondness for Delilah. Mary Magdalene was also one of his favorites. He said he had known quite a few women like her, and they seemed to be, all in all, pretty noble people.

Dad didn't go to church and must have been viewed by the local ministers as a hard man to bring down. He was greatly respected for his honesty and for the way he raised his kids, but regarding his celestial prospects, I don't think the local churches held out much hope.

I remember only one occasion when he attended church, and this stemmed from an incident involving me. I was hitchhiking from Lynch to Cumberland, Kentucky, where I attended Southeast Community College. It was a cold day, and I had been passed up by at least thirty people who had known me all my life and who generally attended church on a regular basis.

Finally, a young man I did not know stopped and gave me a lift. He said he was the new minister at the Baptist Church and also said he was thrilled to be in Lynch. He said the people were wonderfully kind and Christian, and he couldn't think of a place he would rather be.

I told him I would rather be anywhere else, that the place had more hypocrites per square mile than any place on earth. I said I didn't think Christians should leave their halos in the church. What they should do is take their good works out into the community. I was freezing, and I laid it on thick.

That Sunday, Reverend Trent tore into his flock at the Baptist Church. According to my sisters, he preached long and hard about what it means to be your brother's keeper. He drew on the parable of "the good Christian who passes up a hitchhiker he has known since birth." He followed that with the parable of "the Christian who leaves his halo in the corner as he leaves the church." Dad said he had never heard of those parables. I told him I had.

Several weeks later, Reverend Trent made a visitation and invited me to a revival. Dad said he was impressed with the young man and would go with me. He liked parables.

Baptist revivals are wonderful events where people dedicate or rededicate themselves to Christ. They sing, cry, laugh, hug, and in general express themselves in ways they wouldn't ordinarily do. It's an uplifting experience and, all in all, a good thing.

When we entered the church, people were still milling around laughing and socializing. The air was one of nervous expectation as the guest minister was a man of considerable reputation. He was noted, with some envy by fellow ministers, to be a persuasive man: "Beloved by the Lord and feared by the devil."

I had never seen Dad so polite. He shook hands with aston-

ished parishioners, asked about their families, commented on the beautiful fall weather, and gradually steered us to a pew about halfway back. I looked across the church and saw several of the deacons glancing our way and patting Reverend Trent on the back. You could feel the satisfaction throughout the room.

When the evangelist launched into his sermon, it was obvious he had one target. He preached, he invoked, he cried. He pulled out all stops. He warned that to leave the church unrepentant was to risk damnation. He cited anecdote after anecdote of men who had hardened their hearts, of men who would not allow Jesus into their lives, of men who had been killed by trains as they left the church parking lot.

Members of the church were beside themselves. Some were running to the front, crying, proclaiming their faith. Others were being carried out in a swoon. The choir broke into "Bringing in the Sheaves," and this brought in more lambs. My father stood quietly, with his head bowed and his hands resting lightly on the pew in front of him. He never moved.

The minister warmed to the challenge, threw off his coat, and loosened his tie. He took the Bible in his hand, took a deep breath, and set out again. This time, he was all over the church — moving, gesturing, making his case. He had a beautiful voice and used it to its full effect. He alternated between thundering and roaring, on the one hand, and pleading and urging on the other. He spent three-fourths of his time near my father and the other fourth looking in his direction. He gave all any man could give. Dad's response was to raise his head, smile politely, and look back down.

Finally, the Holy Spirit was give out, and things settled down. The minister made the final call, and we filed out. Dad shook the young man's hand and praised his good work. He said he enjoyed the sermon, and it had given him plenty to think about. The minister offered a depleted smile. I believe he considered it, at best, a partial victory.

I don't remember seeing my father in church after this. In time, he got older, and his health failed. He began to realize his mortality and became more receptive to visitation. This is where Brother Hill entered the picture.

Brother Bertrand Hill was a church deacon, a pious man of faith and good works. He was genuine in his efforts to be Christ-like, and my father liked and respected him. Brother Hill, for his part, knew my father to be a man of great charity and compassion, already possessed of many Christian virtues. All that was needed was a profession of faith and a commitment to the Lord. Brother Hill specialized in ministering to the ill and elderly. He had found the near-death experience to be an invaluable ally.

He read the Bible, but I believe this was primarily for the history and adventure.

Their friendship had strengthened in later years, which was how my mother came to ask Brother Hill if he would speak at my father's funeral. Services were held at the Tri-City Funeral Home in Benham, Kentucky, and there was a big turnout. My

Nancy Jane Earnest

father was well-liked, and we had large families on both sides. My oldest sister Ella, my oldest brother Ron, and my sister Jean flew in from Arizona. My sister Lois drove in from Tennessee, and I drove in from Delaware. My brother Ray, who still lives in Lynch, drove down the street.

The day of the funeral arrived, and people were filing by.

"Larry, your dad was crazy as hell. I'm going to miss him."

"Thanks, Mr. Collier. He was a great guy."

"Funniest man I've ever known. Laugh at anything."

"Yes sir, he had a great sense of humor."

"Loved women. Did you know we called him 'cockman' when we was young?"

"Yes sir, I know. Better not let my mother hear that."

"No, of course not. Before he knew her anyway. You take care now. I'm going over and speak to your mom."

"Thank you, sir."

✠ ✠ ✠

"Hey Larry, sorry about your dad."

"Thanks, Mr. Jamison. He was a great guy."

"You remember that time he got in a fight in the poolroom? Knocked Tom Haynes over the table before Tom knew what hit him. Tom told me later he thought he was fighting Three-Fist Wilson."

"I was little then, Mr. Jamison, but I've heard people talk about it."

"Well, your dad was a load when he got mad, but he didn't hold a grudge. Bought Tom a beer ten minutes after the fight. Did you know we called him 'cockman' when he was young?"

"Yes sir, I've heard that."

"Well, take care son. I'm going over and speak to your mom."

✠ ✠ ✠

"Larry, it's good to see you. I'm sorry about your dad."

"Thank you, Mr. Johnson. I miss him already."

"He was a good man, Larry. I worked with him for years. We still talk about that fart he cut over in 37 Mine. We were walking out, and he laid into it. Men were running and hollering. Your dad just kept walking. Best we could estimate, it measured about seventeen feet and nine inches."

"You measured it?"

"Your daddy did. Can't blame him. Hell, you can't let something like that go unrecorded. Larry, you take care of yourself. I'm going over and speak to your mom."

"Mr. Johnson?"

"Yes, son?"

"Don't mention the fart."

"No, of course not — that wouldn't be proper."

✠ ✠ ✠

This is the way it went all morning until finally, the service began and Brother Hill got up to speak. Brother Hill was in his seventies, a man of medium height, dignified and serene. He stepped up to the front and waited for quiet. My father was in the casket behind and to the right of Brother Hill. To Brother Hill's left was a young Baptist minister, who had also agreed to speak. I couldn't help but notice his wife. She was young, blonde, and very beautiful. I'm sure Dad was pleased.

Our family sat in the immediate front in the first row. I sat between my sister Jean and my youngest sister Lois. Brother Hill cleared his throat and began.

He sang two songs in a strong, rich voice. There was no music. His voice carried easily throughout the room, rising and falling, breaking occasionally as befitting a man of his age. This only served to make the song more beautiful and heartfelt. When he finished, a lot of people were crying. He was off to a good start.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "I am here today to talk to you about the Lord Jesus and the wonders he has performed. He has touched my life, and I am sure he has touched yours. Many years ago, when I was a young man, I heard the call and knew I would dedicate myself to spreading the glorious Good News. I have been blessed and am humbled to stand before you today with the knowledge that through the grace of the Lord Jesus, I have brought home three thousand, two hundred and twenty-seven souls to date."

At this point, he took a small, tattered writing tablet from his pocket and held it up. He continued.

"In this booklet are the names, dates, and times those three thousand, two hundred and twenty-seven souls came home to the Lord. Many of you assembled have known me for years and know of my work at Harlan Appalachian Regional Hospital. It has been an abundant seam, and I have mined it for the Lord. That's right. I am proud to have been a miner, a miner for the Lord."

This was beautiful stuff, and things were going along nicely, but we were at least ten minutes into the eulogy, and Brother Hill had yet to mention Dad. People were shifting in their seats, and you could feel a little uncertainty in the room. He picked it back up.

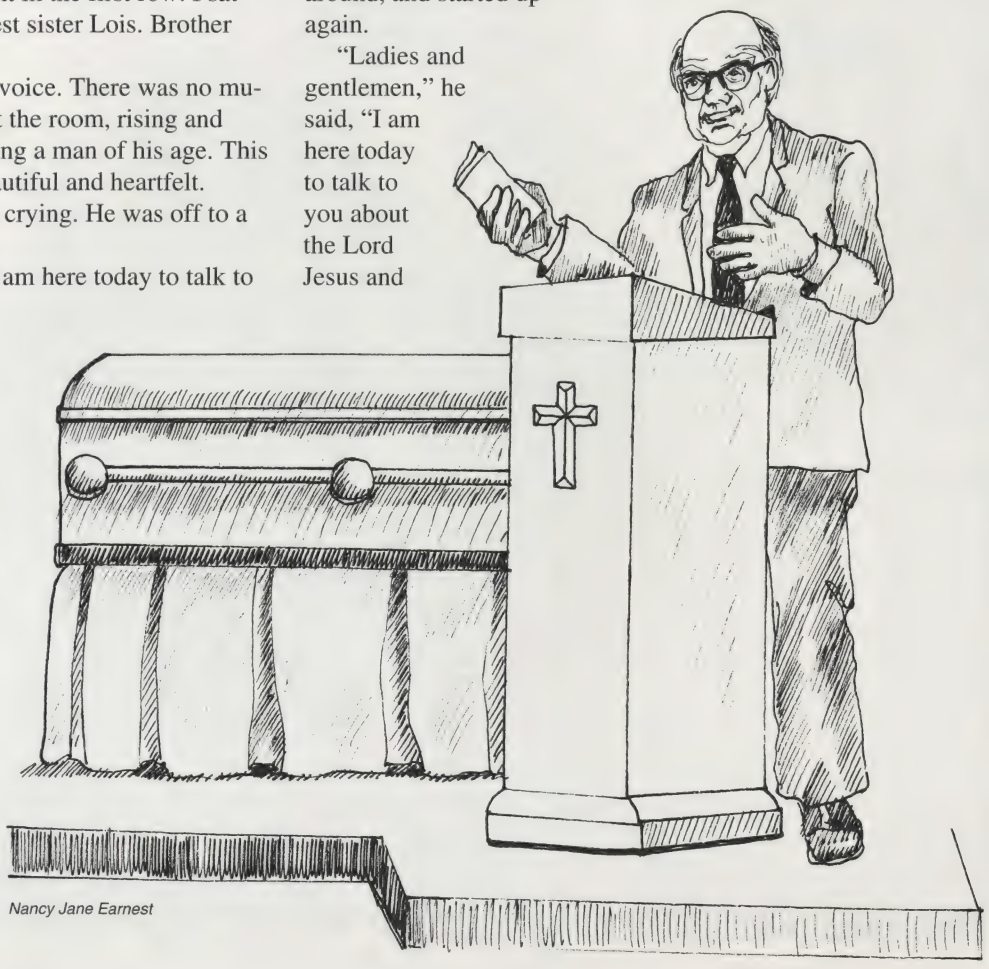
"I remember as a child knowing that I would have a calling among the old and the ill. Other children would shun the elderly — not me, ladies and gentlemen. I gloried in the opportunity. I knew it would be my ministry, my province, the place where I could best serve the Lord Jesus."

He held the tablet up again. "Three thousand, two hundred and twenty-seven souls are with the Lord today because of that ministry. Of course, I am only the earthly arm of the Lord Jesus, a humble servant."

He went on for another twenty minutes, and we all agreed later that it was a fascinating history of Brother Hill and would have been OK if he had mentioned Dad — or at least glanced in his direction. He finally started to wind down and sang another song.

The assembly was restless, and you could hear people moving around and clearing their throats. The young minister was looking down at his feet. Brother Hill finished his song, looked around, and started up again.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "I am here today to talk to you about the Lord Jesus and



Nancy Jane Earnest

the wonders he has performed."

The air went out of the place. Brother Hill had gone senile and picked a heck of a day to show it. My sister Jean's elbow hit me in the ribs.

"I am proud to have been a miner, a miner for the Lord."

"Do something!" she said.

I'm not the eldest child — I'm fourth down the line. But I did get up and walk to the podium next to Brother Hill. He seemed to come out of his reverie and noticed me beside him. I put my arm around his shoulder.

"Brother Hill," I said, "you were a wonderful friend to my father, and on behalf of my family, I want to thank you for your kind words. Do you mind if I say a few things?"

"Of course not, Larry," he said. "Your father was a wonderful man." He glanced toward the casket. "Did you know we called him 'cockman' when he was young?"

For all practical purposes, that was the end of the service. I think Dad left about that time. I spoke for awhile and thanked my mom and dad for raising us right. Then we got into our cars and drove across the mountain to the cemetery and buried Dad.

Funerals are never easy, but thanks to Brother Hill, we had a pretty good day. N&T

Jerry Richardson is a Harlan County native and a graduate of the University of Kentucky. He spent 25 interesting years teaching 8th grade in Kentucky and Maryland. He now lives in Georgetown, Ky., with his wife Kelcey and their horses, Chimera and Pretty Eula Mae.

RITUAL ROAD

Uncle Kip's truck on King College Road
was the clumsiest prayer ever uttered.
We sputtered along in shuddery ritual,
shouting spells over-drone for a vivid tomorrow:

A pinch of rising heart,
A stretch of unobstructed road,
A carefully beaded safety pin bit into a shoe
for friendship.
Two shakes of sugar bought on a Saturday
at Barker's,
Toss in some gossip and a favorite local
strummer's song,
Tie a ribbon 'round your wrist the length of the world,
and unwind it out the window,
And repeat five days a week
on the same old ritual road.

Repeat five days a week on the very same ritual road.

— Kimberly Brittingham

Kimberly Brittingham, who grew up in Bristol, Tenn., now resides in Philadelphia where she runs Philadelphia Dial-A-Poet, bringing recorded poetry to the public through free telephone access. Her work has appeared in Mobius, Dream International Quarterly, Curmudgeon, Insomnia & Poetry, Synapse, *and* The Schuylkill Valley Journal.

The Greater Love Church of God in Christ

A Photoessay by Gediyon Kifle

Back in the summer of 1994, photographer Gediyon Kifle, then an East Tennessee State University (ETSU) undergraduate, was looking for a subject for a documentary class project.

The Ethiopian-born Kifle decided to document Johnson City, Tenn.'s, African American community. Initially, he intended to cover all the churches in that community since he understood full well that "in the black community, the church plays a great role."

Soon he realized there are many more churches in Johnson City than he could possibly hope to do justice to; he homed in on The Greater Love Church of God in Christ Pentecostal Holiness Church, currently pastored by Elder Roger M. Charles. "It was a very small church, a very intimate church. It was exciting to photograph," he remembers.

What captivated Kifle was the intensely personal, spontaneous way in which the congregation's members expressed themselves at various random points during the service.

"As a photographer, I try to capture what people are feeling. The people at this church expressed their dedication and their love for Christ vividly, with a lot of body movement. They don't have any specific time during the service for doing that. Sometimes, for example, they just feel it in the middle of a hymn. They go into their own spiritual feelings, and they express those feelings by movement.

"Each of them has his or her own expression. They're not tuned in to each other or to the minister. They're all of them in their inner souls — seeking God, connecting with God."

Kifle took these photographs of Tracy Good while documenting Johnson City's African American community in 1994 and during a 1995 project on interracial couples. Good is a longtime member of the church and mother of two children. "What I was trying to capture," he explains, "was how the eye and gestures could express her experience of God."

Kifle graduated from ETSU last May and now works for Media Consultant of Washington, D.C. **— JHW**

Tracy Good, The Greater Love Church of God in Christ, Johnson City, Tenn., Summer 1994.

Elder Roger M. Charles of The Greater Love Church of God in Christ, Johnson City, Tenn., Fall 1995.

Altar Call, Fall 1995.

Praise Service, Fall 1995.

Tracy Good, her husband John (above and to her right), and the congregation of The Greater Love Church of God in Christ sing sacred songs, Fall 1995.

Tracy Good, The Greater Love Church of God in Christ, Johnson City, Tenn., Summer 1994.

Return to Genesis:

Four Poems by Daniel Leidig

Eve

After creation
and after dust was given life
and after the planting of the garden
and the growing of every tree
that is pleasant to the sight
and good for food
and after Havilah
the land of onyx and gold
and after instruction to knowledge
and the ordination of work

and after the endowment of voice
and the beneficence of language
and the naming of the animals

still came loneliness

and god said It is not good
and he brought Eve to the man
and she lifted her hand to touch
the small hollow in his side

and paradise was made whole.

Abraham

Beneath the oaks at Mamre
the old man brushed
at the ubiquitous gnats,
rubbed the sweat
from his dimming eyes,
strained to see
in the midday heat
the hooded figures
in shimmering visitation.

He had never accustomed himself
to these appearances — from Ur to Egypt,
during the wanderings in Canaan,
from the Negeb to the hill country
where Lot elected the pastures of Sodom —
these bold visitations, these covenants.

Now being old
he was full of solicitude
commanding that water be brought,
standing while the strangers ate
his cakes and curds and loin of calf

hearing and believing once more the solemn promises
even as the Lord himself
was asking why Sarah,
standing inside the sweltering tent,
had laughed.

Leah

Should I someday say
to this lone infant daughter
Be wary of fathers?
Tell her how Laban
used me for hire,
shamed me with guile?

Tell her how husbands
prefer sultry sisters,
wrench from us sons —
six, Zebulun, the *sixth* —
and I, still without honor?
They count goats more than us,
spend our inheritance,
enter our tents looking
for small gods.

No, child, I shall tend
your soft beauty with hope,
arm you with mandrakes
and bring you forth smiling
an unrivalled daughter,
far from Shechem and strangers,
to some son of our people
who will treat you with honor,
spare you defilement
and bless you for love.

Rachel

I will weep for my children
should I come to that day
far away, when the sons
of a son of my sorrow
are carried away

but for now I sing an old story
a shepherdess' song
round the campfires of Haran
where the tellers assemble
and tell the nightlong

of the servant who came
to our kinswoman there
with a gold ring for her nose
smooth bracelets refined
and combs for her hair.

And the story is made new
by a young man at the well
who now waters my sheep
and says his mother it was
of whom our songs tell

and while smiling at me
he speaks of staying on here
in this land for a while
to serve Laban my father
for perhaps a whole year.

Dan Leidig says that the King James version of the Bible was his earliest and most influential textbook. Now retired from teaching literature, he lives in Emory, Va. These selections from his manuscript, "Return to Genesis," reflect his continuing engagement with the language and import of sacred story.

At Home in the Web of Life

Religious Values & Development

by John S. Rausch

Catholic bishops envision local, sustainable communities taking root and flourishing in Appalachia.

On U.S. 23 just west of Norton, Va., in Wise County, tourists and travelers view a lengthy stretch of Powell Valley, with its crenulated ridges and folds wrapping the valley, its roads and streams dissecting the bottomland in a drunkard's pattern, its mega-buck mansions and family farms dotting the green or golden fields. Typically, visitors stand in silence, allowing the vastness and beauty to renew the spirit and speak poetically to the soul.

Yet in other parts of Wise County, highwalls from strip mining girdle mountainsides, and flatlands show scars of gullies from meager reclamation efforts. Other areas of Appalachia brace themselves for an onslaught of clear-cut logging. In Lafollete, Tenn., for example, a Champion Paper chip mill promises to eat 60 acres of timber a day from the surrounding area.

The region, like a picture window, displays the potential and the consequences of social and economic policies.

So Appalachia combines in tension the beauty of creation and the demands of commerce. The region, like a picture window, displays the potential and the consequences of social and economic policies. And, like a mirror, Appalachia reflects the trends and choices of national and global economies.

In 1975, the 26 Catholic bishops of Appalachia, from Southern New York to Northeast Mississippi, wrote a pastoral letter about the region. A pastoral letter represents a written reflection about a topic or situation that has important moral and religious implications to society, one that should be addressed by biblical and traditional values. "This Land Is Home to Me" discussed the wealth of the land and the poverty of the people.

It contrasted the power of the economic forces, many of which originated outside the region, with the powerlessness of the Appalachian people, many of whom shared only marginally in the bounty surrounding them. The pastoral letter challenged the church to listen to the pleas of the folks denied their heritage and to recognize in local campaigns for dignity the presence of God's Spirit.

In 1995, the Appalachian bishops released a second pastoral detailing their thoughts about the region. "At Home in the Web of Life" continues the examination of life in Appalachia, but in a different context. In the intervening

Glenmary Home Missioners

John Rausch

20 years, the American economic system has grown more globally directed and more consumption-addicted.

The 58-page pastoral letter forces an examination of society's patterns of business and consumption. It does not supply a detailed blueprint but instead charts a general direction for the region's future development.

In the bishops' minds, Appalachia stands at a crossroads facing the same sorts of choices that are being faced by the larger American society and the world. One direction will take Appalachia, the nation, and the world down a path of ecological and social devastation. An alternative path will sustain people who live in harmony with the land. Along that second path — the sustainable one — "the people and land of Appalachia, using their own rich gifts in social and ecological cooperation and taking advantage of the new tools of the electronic age, would form authentic local communities rooted in God's sacred web of life."

Courtesy of the Glenmary Home Missioners

Sustainable forestry using horses to harvest timber is a less intrusive practice supported by the Clinch Powell Sustainable Development Initiative.

Trends within Appalachia, especially in the Northern and Central regions where industrial changes in steel, coal mining, and apparel manufacturing wrecked the economic base of many small towns, point toward further devastation of nature and communities. For example, in the Appalachian town of Ripley, Ohio, U.S. Shoe, Inc., a company owned by a caring business family who initiated profit sharing in the mid-1950s, was sold in the late 1980s to a group of outside investors. The new management replaced piecework with a modular system of team production that lowered the wages of most workers. Then, one week before Christmas, 1992, U.S. Shoe closed its Ripley plant, loaded the machinery on trucks, and drove 355 jobs to Honduras.

The mechanization of coal mines, competition from overseas, and the move to Western states with their large open-pit operations have eroded mining employment in Appalachia, a source of middle-class wages. The Philadelphia-based Westmoreland Coal Company, having operated in the area for nearly 100 years, recently closed all its deep mines in Southwest Virginia.

The lack of economic diversity in the area promises stubborn long-term unemployment, possible large-scale outmigration, or at best, work opportunities in extractive industries which are indifferent to the environment. Already the emphasis in Eastern Kentucky and Southwest Virginia has shifted to strip mining that scars the terrain, disturbs wells, and pollutes streams. Logging operations are leasing thousands of acres of forest for clear-cutting, just as they did a century ago. Mega-processing plants for paper and particle board manufacturing are located in North Carolina, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia. Clear-cutting, like stripmining, sacrifices the habitat and limits the natural diversity of plants and animals by leveling the hillsides. The replanting of a monoculture of softwoods, such as pines that grow more quickly than the hardwoods they replace, continues to rob the area of a habitat that can support greater diversity.

Courtesy of Eula Mae Hall

Eula Mae Hall responded to the need for more local health care in Floyd County, Ky., by opening her house as a health clinic. When the house burned down, she raised the money to build a new clinic.

Initially integrated into the larger U.S. economy as a mineral and natural resource colony, Appalachia now finds itself the dumping ground for garbage, toxic waste, and the unwanted members of society. Hungry for jobs and revenue, rural counties vie with one another to store the nation's refuse by filling abandoned coal mines and stripped areas with household and commercial waste. Frequently industrial parks in these counties stand idle — a testimony to the win-lose drama of laissez-faire economics.

The proliferation of prisons in rural areas emerges as a growth industry in Appalachia. Virginia recently announced plans to construct three new facilities in Lee, Wise, and Dickenson Counties, where poverty and unemployment remain high. Eastern Kentucky will get two. Correctional institutions act as human warehouses for people who are usually from urban areas and sometimes from outside the region, people whose lives lack hope and whose bodies remain tethered to drugs.

So the throwaway consumer society promoted by the national and glo-

bal economies leaves distinct footprints on the roads of Appalachia: plant closings, garbage dumping, strip mining, clear-cutting, and prison building. This pattern results in quick profits, environmental damage, diminished services, unemployment, and addiction. This is not sustainable. This is the culture of death.

"I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19). Reflecting the admonition of Joshua to the people of Israel in the Book of Deuteronomy, the bishops counsel that only a new direction can rescue society from inevitable folly. Their pastoral letter encourages creating and defending sustainable communities and further explores the meaning of living "at home in the web of life."

Throughout Appalachia, examples suggest that sustainable communities will depend not on attracting outside corporations lured by tax breaks and cheap labor but on mutual support among members of Appalachian communities.

Two common words, *economics* and *ecology,* come from similar Greek roots. *Economics* comes from Greek words that mean "ordering of the home," while *ecology* comes from roots that mean "logic of the home." The pastoral letter asks, "How can economics and ecology, as the logic and order of the home, be mutually opposed?" Individual homes fit into the one common home, the earth. The challenge remains to meet the material needs of individual households without trashing the earth as the common household. The jobs versus environment controversy represents a false choice.

For over a year, from 1993 to 1994, representatives from business, environmental, and various other community organizations from Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia met to formulate a regional plan. They subsequently produced a document that incorporates principles of ecology with business development. The Clinch Powell Sustainable Development Initiative, the resulting organization, promotes a greater regional self-reliance in food, energy, and basic needs production. The group encouraged the Highlands Bio-Produce Network of Abingdon, Va., a group which consists of a dozen biological gardeners who market produce directly to restaurants and residents in the Abingdon-Bristol, Tenn.-Va. area. For Christmas and special occasions, the Clinch Powell Initiative markets "Mountain Gift Baskets" that support the local basketmakers and area farmers who grow and process traditional mountain edibles, such as molasses, popcorn, and herbal teas.

The Clinch Powell Initiative also encourages sustainable forestry that harvests timber using draft horses. The practice, which avoids intrusive road building and indiscriminate clear-cutting, preserves the integrity of the forest as a biosystem while allowing a continuous harvesting of timber year after year from the same woodlot. Other approved strategies include greater use of solar energy in home construction, developing value-added products related to timber, and coordinating ecotourism to create employment while respecting the environment.

These examples represent steps towards the development of sustainable communities which will — according to the pastoral — "conserve and not waste, be simpler but better, keep most resources circulating locally, create sustainable livelihoods, support family life, protect the richness of nature, develop people spiritually, and follow God's values."

Yet people engaged in commercial enterprises are not the only ones attempting to create sustainable communities. Citizens are also working to make their own communities responsive to pressing needs. In Floyd County, Ky., for example, Eula Mae Hall, a local woman with little formal education, offered her house as a health clinic on Mud Creek. At the time, her county only provided transportation to town doctors or to distant medical facilities.

In 1982, burglars looking for drugs burned the clinic to the ground. The next day, with the ruins still smoldering, Hall directed the doctor to examine patients under the shade tree in the front yard, then got the phone company to install a phone on the willow tree. She called Washington and arranged for matching funds from the Appalachian Regional Commission, then raised $102,000 in 90

Southern Appalachian Photographic Archives, Mars Hill College

Catholic school in Abingdon, Va., in the 1890s. The four oldest Rumbaugh girls, who were from an Episcopalian family in Hot Springs, N.C., attended the school because there was no public education in their home town. Three of the four converted to Catholicism.

days for a new building. Two years later, a new clinic opened and now serves 65 to 75 patients a day.

Establishing a health clinic knits neighbor to neighbor. It strengthens community and affirms God's sacred web of life. It embraces those excluded from essential services in the current system and builds a sustainable pattern for the future.

Throughout Appalachia, examples suggest that sustainable communities will depend not on attracting outside corporations lured by tax breaks and cheap labor but on mutual support among members of Appalachian communities, support that empowers people and expands opportunity, especially among women. In McDowell County, W.Va., Stop Abusive Family Environments (SAFE) offers abused spouses an escape from intolerable relationships. Women who choose a more self-directed life find increasing opportunities to receive their graduate equivalency diploma (GED). At Mountain Women's Exchange in Jellico, Tenn., they can earn an associate's degree from a college extension program.

Women's Initiative Networking Groups, Inc., (WINGS) in Berea, Ky., provides entrepreneurial training, marketing consultation, and networking opportunities to lower-income women interested in starting a small business. "Micro-enterprises" which operate on small amounts of capital and are often based in the home represent an expression of development rooted in the community.

In terms of the marketplace, sustainable development looks for ways in which people and nature can live together in harmony so future generations can do the same. "At Home in the Web of Life" describes the culture of death experienced by Appalachia as a pattern of the larger American society. The antidote to this cultural poisoning entails affirming the patterns that sustain life: respect for people, appreciation of creation, and the promotion of community. These religious values promise a future and show the perceptive a sustainable direction for development. N&T

John S. Rausch, a Catholic priest and member of the Glenmary Home Missioners, teaches at the Appalachian Ministries Educational Resource Center, Berea, Ky. For over 20 years, he has worked in Appalachia promoting cooperatives and community development.

Eden Again

Bouncing and chirping in code
across the acre of this lawn,
two cardinals, man and wife,
a small wren hoarding five eggs
in a holly bush, one terrified grouse,
and a blue jay whose name
belies his Manson-like character.
You can warm a man's life
with a good name.
The lean dogwoods hang fat
with white blossoms.
The violets open their eyes
and peer about.
In the beginning, God saw a million
beginnings and whispered two things
in Adam's ear as he withdrew
his bloody fingers and a rib
lay writhing on the grass.
"Ample time," he whispered, "ample time,"
and then the bad joke that sank the Titanic.
Adam ignored the latter, already he busied
himself with the growing rib,
larger and larger, round and soft.
Adam's flesh shrieked in its chains.
You know the rest.
Downstairs my sister is playing the piano
she has neglected for years.
She is heavy with her first child, a boy,
who will grow to learn the trials
of his namesake, Adam,
the world's first farmer.
Even now the enzymes are swirling like liquor
around him, fitting his tongue
with the high-pitched accents
of tradition and ignorance.
If love is man unfinished,
if the gestalt must twist into a name,
let the coterie heroes of Soweto and Tibet
learn to love this one, as old as the earth.
Let them bless this boy
with the resilience of flint,
the spirit of hollyhock,
blessing his persistent name,
too beautiful to bear, too fierce to perish.

— Keith Flynn

Keith Flynn is founder and managing editor of the Asheville (N.C.) Poetry Review. *He is a lyricist and lead singer for the rock band The Crystal Zoo. His two poetry collections are* The Talking Drum *and* The Book of Monsters.

Reviews

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Urbana and Chicago - 1995
$24.95 (paper)

Rarely does a book come along that marks an authentic transition in how people approach and think about a subject. Deborah McCauley's study of Appalachian mountain religion is such a book and marks just such a transition.

McCauley has given us a startling, historically rich, and deeply passionate study of the complexity as well as the common identity of Appalachian mountain religion. Previously anecdotal and dispersed, the study of Appalachian mountain religion has to be looked at in a wholly new way since this book's appearance.

Even more: By looking precisely at what is distinctive in Appalachian regional religious tradition, McCauley supplies new insights into the larger picture and dynamics of American religious traditions. The students in my Appalachian religious traditions class gave direct testimony to the sense that something had changed with the publication of this book. They began referring to it simply as "The Book," in the same way that New Yorkers refer to their place as "The City."

Works like this one that mark a significant transition accomplish several things at once. They establish a "story" by gathering and preserving what is central and essential in the earlier history of the region. Such works cancel the tangential and false by focusing upon the real and distinctive characteristics of the subject. They nullify the benevolent depreciation of Appalachia's history and people through patronizing caricature. They lift or elevate the tradition to a new level of insight (and often even to a new sense of wonder), and they establish directions and structures which future studies of this tradition will have to confront. These characteristics are all present in McCauley's work.

Gathering together the various historical strata that constitute Appalachian mountain religion, she attends to "the variety as well as the continuity and historical integrity of the worship practices, belief systems, religious experiences, and church tradition." She does not look for some generalized religious mountain "essence," but instead she examines particular historical traditions in the mountains.

She discusses 16th century reformation theology (and the disputes arising over central doctrines about the relation between the human and the divine) and 18th century pietism, which advocated a revitalized evangelical Christianity. She describes the Scotch-Irish sacramental revivalism, a movement originating in Ireland and Scotland which combined communal sacramental meetings with powerful emotional piety. It came to the mountains and exploded at the turn of the 19th century into the Great Western Revival at Cane Ridge, Ky. Finally, she chronicles 19th century folk camp meeting revivals, which became a distinctive Appalachian form of worship with its outdoor or tent services, often lasting several days. Particularly important is her discussion in chapter 9, "Scots-Irish Religiosity," which shows how sacramental revival practices from Ireland and Scotland were transplanted to Appalachia, shaping the energy and forms of religious experience here ever since.

Warren Brunner

Deborah McCauley discusses mountain evangelists such as Sister Lydia Surgener, shown (standing) in 1987 during her weekly Sunday radio show on WSWV, Pennington Gap, Va. With her are her nephew, Junior, and Sister Mae June Hensley.

The most controversial portion of her work is the last fourth. In this concluding section, she indicts the "home missions" activities of mainline churches which, in order to "serve" the region, end up stereotyping and belittling it. Before these mainline missionaries can help people, they have to see those people as helpless victims in need of rescue.

Her survey of the home mission movements is McCauley at her toughest. It is her *J'accuse!* Stung, many have cried out in self-defense. But perhaps defensiveness is not the best response of those of us who also speak for mainline churches. She has thrown her lightning bolt. We should stop and attend to her reversals — and perhaps do some reversals ourselves.

She is provocative, and she has gotten our attention. The provocation will shape future discussions which are bound to continue in response to McCauley's book. This shaking-up and opening up of future studies should be welcomed by scholars and friends of Appalachian religion and its story.

— John Wallhausser

The Penniman Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Berea College, Berea, Ky., John Wallhausser has written on the Old Regular Baptists of Appalachia.

Taking Up Serpents: Snake Handlers of Eastern Kentucky
by David L. Kimbrough
University of North Carolina Press
Chapel Hill, N.C. - 1995
$14.95 (paper), $34.95 (hardcover)

Historian David L. Kimbrough accomplishes a feat in this book that has no precedent in the literature about Appalachia's serpent handlers. He creates

a comprehensive social historical context, rich in details and personal experience, for understanding and appreciating Appalachia's most sensationalized and least understood religious tradition. In contrast to *New York Times* stringer and creative writing teacher Dennis Covington's 15 minutes of fame last year for *Salvation on Sand Mountain*, his I-was-there book on serpent handlers, Kimbrough's book is now the benchmark for all the articles and books that have appeared and will inevitably follow about Appalachia's serpent-handling communities of faith.

Kimbrough's *Taking Up Serpents* has received some surprisingly rough reviews — some dismissive, some trivializing. I suggest that a book such as Kimbrough's that is sympathetic and solid as a rock — in the thoroughness of the history it pioneers and the interpretive analyses it proposes — is simply more than many reviewers can handle *precisely* because it presents so well a subject they find frightening, irrational, and offensive.

This is especially the case when a book such as Kimbrough's effectively challenges deep prejudices about its subject. Kimbrough's study leaves little room for attitudes that strip the people his book portrays of their intense humanity. Nor does he allow much leeway for the common opinion that rejects the soundness of the serpent handlers' profound faith, a faith which requires of them the great personal risk so characteristic of mountain religious traditions in general, because common opinion deems utterly unacceptable the *form* of risk they take.

Taking Up Serpents is the first to affirm that serpent-handling mountain Christians are not peculiar unto themselves but are clearly a part of mountain religion's larger independent nondenominational Holiness tradition. They are distinguished from that tradition in worship practices and beliefs only by the inclusion of serpent handling, fire handling, and drinking poison. Kimbrough is also the first to make clear distinctions between different theological traditions of serpent handlers. The main division is between Oneness or Jesus Only groups and Trinitarian groups, a common distinction in the larger Holiness-Pentecostal movements of which serpent-handling Appalachian Christians are also a part.

Kimbrough confines his study, appropriately so, to the Trinitarians rather than mixing together all serpent handlers as though such defining characteristics do not exist or are unimportant, as have nearly all other writers on the subject. Kimbrough also recognizes and affirms mountain Holiness' strong plainfolk camp meeting heritage in the region, stating that their "practices and beliefs represented an intensification and elaboration of traditional norms, not a drastic aberration from them."

The most significant contribution *Taking Up Serpents* offers its readers is that it is the first work to make serpent handling in Appalachia historically intelligible. It provides a solid social history of the Saylor family of Eastern Kentucky. The author traces the religious path of the Saylors, one of the area's premier serpent-handling families (whom Kimbrough came to know very well personally), from the Presbyterian heritage they brought with them when they first settled in Kentucky at the beginning of the 19th century through their shift to Primitive Baptist Calvinism and finally to Holiness traditions at the end of the 19th century.

Kimbrough also provides a persuasive contextual framework for serpent handling in Appalachia heretofore lacking in almost all of the existing literature. This interpretive framework dismisses the seemingly obvious, the easy, and the wrongheaded stereotypes of the past and present, whether condescendingly benevolent or condemnatory.

The crush of media enthusiasm, from *Oprah* to *Dateline NBC,* for Covington's Norman Mailer-like fictionalized history, with its flair for the dramatic at the expense of the truth it purports to tell (and at the expense of the real-life people it names and portrays), stands in sharp contrast to the critical responses aimed at Kimbrough's careful, unassuming, and respectful presentation. Self-serving exploitation does not characterize Kimbrough's book. Instead, he provides us in *Taking Up Serpents* with steady, evenly paced, and appropriately sympathetic scholarship that makes a genuine contribution to Appalachia's social religious history.

— Deborah Vansau McCauley

Independent scholar, writer, and editor specializing in American religious history, Deborah Vansau McCauley is author of Appalachian Mountain Religion: A History.

God in the Stadium: Sports and Religion in America

by Robert J. Higgs

The University Press of Kentucky
Lexington, Ky. - 1995
$15.95 (paper), $39.95 (hardcover)

Over the past 30 years, a small cadre of scholars and theologians have speculated that America has transformed sports into a cultural religion.

In 1976, conservative Catholic Michael Novak contended in *Joy of Sports* that sport is a secular religion. In 1993, Charles S. Prebish edited *Religion and Sport* which investigates the tangled relationship between games and the metaphysical. A year earlier, Shirl J. Hoffman edited *Sport and Religion,* in which various scholars sought a common ground between playful activities and holy endeavors.

In *God in the Stadium,* Robert J. Higgs voices a unique, dissenting viewpoint. His critique of the unholy alliance of sport and religion uses the contrasting symbols of two religious archetypes: the knight and the shepherd. Higgs' construct has shepherds as social and nature prophets and places them in opposition to the knightly saints, whose worldly success emphasizes competition and conquest.

Thus, like a catcher guarding homeplate, Higgs positions himself for a massive collision with the expert opinions espoused in those earlier tomes. Fortunately Higgs, who is equally knowledgeable about "revealed" Protestant religion and sport, is aware of the arguments pertaining to rituals and sacred space and time as they appear in a sports venue. But Higgs has his shinguard firmly planted in front of homeplate as he declares that similarities between sport and religion do not mean that these two disparate activities are identical.

Reviews

To those scholars who believe that games may afford participants a secular religious experience, *God in the Stadium* is Higgs' rebuttal. In addition, he takes issue with evangelists, such as Jerry Falwell, who use sport as a tool; Higgs argues that the mixture of the two entities leads to a corruption of both.

Higgs provokes the reader to think (and argue) about sports and religion. Is it possible to quibble with Higgs' thesis, assumptions, and models? In each section of this work, the answer (as he intended) is a resounding "Yes!"

Golfers, for example, will point to Michael Murphy's mystical 1972 classic, *Golf in the Kingdom,* as proof that sport and religion can coexist. The novel seduced readers into believing that a god-like character named Shivas Irons could use an Irish shillelagh to hit a feathery 200 yards while teaching mere mortals that the secret of golf is the secret of life: "true gravity," defined as "the joining of awareness, delight and embracing-force." Zealous dry-fly fishermen will refer to Norman Maclean's *A River Runs Through It.* In this novella, a Scottish Presbyterian minister on Montana's Big Blackfoot River teaches his sons the art of casting with a dry-fly while preaching that "all good things — trout as well as eternal salvation — come by grace and grace comes by art and art does not come easy." And on any autumn Saturday, college football coaches lead their teams into packed stadiums following "Christian" prayers, prayers that skip the usual "amen" for pragmatic exhortations such as: "Let's go kick the shit out of those mothers."

Higgs focuses on, but by no means limits himself to, big-time, commercial sport — especially college football. In this far-ranging work, he starts with a capsule history of American attitudes about sport and play from the Puritans to the present. He moves quickly over this well-charted territory to an instructive section on the theme of heroism and chivalry in American sports and the role of the service academies, particularly West Point. Commenting on the origins of the knight (versus the shepherd) ideal at West Point, Higgs notes the early signs of corruption in both sport and religion and points out how this concept moved into mainstream American commercial sport.

Short-listed for this year's nonfiction Pulitzer Prize, this pithy volume offers a Jungian reconstruction of the psyche of American males. Higgs' research lucidly displays the relationships between sport, religion, the military, and institutions of higher education. In the process, the cult of "Christian Manliness" receives a severe look.

He notes five overlapping periods of cultural history in which the ideal male is portrayed. In each phase, Higgs demonstrates how the image of the knight — one which emphasizes duty, authority, and pride — triumphs over the image of the shepherd, with its emphasis on consensus, compassion, and humility.

Higgs does not waffle as he surveys attitudes and values. He points a finger of shame at everyone from Theodore Roosevelt, who advocated "carrying a big stick" and equated manly behavior with playing football (at Harvard), going to war, and killing large game, to Amos Alonzo Stagg, the legendary football coach who introduced such questionable practices as secret budgets and reduced academic standards for star players. Higgs also turns his critical eye on Billy Sunday, the ex-major leaguer turned evangelist whose "win one for Jesus" declaration is echoed regularly in televised postgame interviews by players and coaches.

Higgs has written a book that is provocative, knowledgeable, gracefully phrased, humorous, gentle, and wise. As an award-winning scholar and athlete, one who played both football and baseball at the U.S. Naval Academy, he has wrestled long and hard with the corruptions, contradictions, hypocrisies, and ambivalence of commercial big-time sports in schools and colleges. In *God in the Stadium,* Higgs' diligent research reveals the roots of this corruption: a combination of militarism and institutional religion, both of which have used sport for their own questionable, unholy ends and means.

— Lyle Olsen

After 50 unsuccessful years of religiously chasing the bitch goddess of success via team sports, Lyle Olsen is firmly convinced that the profane pursuit of breaking 80 on a golf course is equally futile. He teaches at East Tennessee State University, Johnson City.

The Sound of the Dove: Singing in Appalachian Primitive Baptist Churches

by Beverly Bush Patterson

University of Illinois Press
Urbana, Ill. - 1995
$37.50 (hardcover)

I myself have faulted my own ethnographic studies of Appalachian religion for their minimal attention to hymnody, a defect generated by my lack of training in any aspect of musicology. Beverly Bush Patterson, folklife specialist with the North Carolina Arts Council, does not suffer from such a deficiency. *The Sound of the Dove,* her study of the singing of Primitive Baptists in the central Blue Ridge, establishes her as a significant contributor to the burgeoning literature on Appalachian religious traditions.

Welcome, Beverly! You have already taught me much about what I hear when I visit not only Primitive church services but also such "Old Baptist" groups as Regulars, Old Regulars, Uniteds, Primitive Baptist Universalists, and a host of other subdenominations present in our mountains.

Patterson's work focuses primarily on the singing style found in the churches of the Mountain District Association, an alliance of nine Primitive Baptist fellowships in Northwest North Carolina and Southwest Virginia. Although she also paid some attention to other Primitive clusters in Kentucky and West Virginia, her main observations were made at churches that draw their memberships from North Carolina's Ashe and Alleghany Counties and Virginia's Grayson County. Her fieldwork dates back principally to the summers of 1982 and 1983 when she was a University of North Carolina doctoral candidate in cultural anthropology. That initial fieldwork provided the data for Patterson's dissertation, which she later revised and extended to produce this book.

One warning to *The Sound of the Dove* reader: Appalachian Primitives are a highly diverse lot. Although the definitive research is yet to be done, scholars will find at least a half-dozen — and probably more — theologically discrete

Primitive subsets in Appalachia. Therefore, there is a danger in Patterson's occasional all-inclusive statement about "Appalachian Primitive Baptist Churches."

However, in general, *The Sound of the Dove* provides thoughtful examinations of such factors as the historical origins of Primitive hymnody, tune variations provided by individual churches or associations, the contributions of the song leader, and the roles of women with the tradition. One discussion I want especially to praise occurs late in the volume. It is a sensitive and perceptive examination of the Primitive Baptist occupational, lifestyle, and mind-set shifts that have coincided with recent movements of individual churches away from the old 1887 D. H. Goble *Primitive Baptist Hymn Book* (containing no tunes, only lyrics) to more contemporary "hymn-and-tune" publications.

Patterson sees parallels between the minor sounding melodies of the older hymns, hymns she collectively calls the "lonesome" tunes, and the uncertainties of frontier life. She also discovers other alignments between the more modern gospel tune influences and the now greatly changed life of the contemporary Primitive. I will, however, leave the details of that engaging analysis for the reader's own discovery.

— Howard Dorgan

Howard Dorgan teaches communication at Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C. He has just finished In the Hands of a Happy God, *his study of Primitive Baptist Universalists in Appalachia, due to be released in 1997.*

Old & New Testaments
by Lynn Powell
University of Wisconsin Press
Madison, Wis. - 1995
$10.95 (paper), $17.95 (hardcover)

The opening lines of "Nativity," the lead poem in Lynn Powell's *Old & New Testaments,* announce a central concern:

> Some parents shy away from the body,
> but we hush up about the cross —
> rereading our daughter the story about
> Jesus
> we most believe in: mother
> and father kneeling after the hard birth,
> humbled by the exhaustions of love.

The 42 poems that comprise this collection, winner of the 1995 Brittingham Prize in Poetry, explore the life of the body, the physicality of experience, the senses as avenue to memory and spirit, the immediate and extended family as *body.* A mother nurturing a young son and daughter, the narrator of these poems also examines her own childhood, remembering and evaluating her experiences growing up as a Southern Baptist.

By narrating her memories in "Sword Drill," she recovers a moment of truth years later, the revelation that the word really can become flesh: *"For now / we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face,* clutching / the coveted words, unsheathed / in time." The subtlety and power of this poem lie not only in the rendering of vivid details but also in the unspoken *experiencing* evident in those final lines.

In "Rapture," she details childhood doubt and fear of abandonment (not only by parents but also the more profound fear of being left behind on the day of rapture at the end of the world); the poem then turns toward a significant new awareness of the body's attractiveness: "the landscape of hidden legs / and chest and arms outstretched, red scripture / of lips teaching me new prayers." Through the process of recalling these old testaments of belief comes the new testament, the forging of belief in the day-to-day, in the miraculous transformations of love, in sensuousness, and yes, in the humbling power of the "exhaustions of love."

Perhaps the life of the body finds its most poignant remembering in the wonderful poem "Balm": "After love, I keep your smell all day, / my own smell subsumed like a maiden name." And then, at the poem's conclusion, she says, *My skin remembers you.* / I write, / then lift my hands, savor / their sweet congratulations." The physical act of love, smell evanescent but lingering as memory, the act of writing as memory and praise — all meld in this remarkable poem.

But for whatever balm exists in this life, the hard reality persists: Time wears the body away, and death becomes the great definer and measure of all things. Through three extraordinary poems — "At Ninety-Eight," "Promised Land," and "Revelation" — Powell introduces us to Aunt Roxy, the oldest member of her extended family "body " and surely the grand muse whose feisty love of the world pervades this book. The knowledge found in these poems is hard-won but solid, sure, and unflinching.

In "Revelation," the poet speaks of her Aunt Roxy:

> She's ready for the promised new flesh,
> the replenishing of the heart's emptied
> cache. …
> And I think, how heart-breaking and human, how predictable
> really, this longing to salvage and restore the body —
> as if ruin, written on the flesh at birth,
> could be erased once time has washed
> over it
> and spelled out the same, sad, immutable text.
>
> A cloud of ammonia drifts up into the
> room
> as she pees on the sheepskin laid down
> for her bedsores.
> I hesitate, then pull back the blanket to
> change her gown
> and uncover a surprise: a belly relaxed
> out
> of its stretch and pucker, creamy, polished,
> the marks of birthing rubbed to a patina,
> to a whorl of sheen translucent as the
> Lord's thumbprint —
> and the hairs of the pubis, lying thick
> and straight
> like grass, silvered and smoothed by
> strong wind.

The poems in *Old & New Testaments* speak to us in a language polished but accessible, their wisdom always brought down-to-earth, into the body. As poet and literary critic Stanley Kunitz noted in his essay "The Wisdom of the Body" years ago, "the body, in its genetic code, holds the long odyssey of the race. When our organs are working healthily and harmoniously, the joy that floods our being cannot be much different from what Adam knew. … Our most sublime thoughts have their feet planted in clay; our best songs are body-songs."

Reviews

Call this work an extended hymn to the body, to the five senses as gateway to the spirit, to the common processes of living and loving that unite us all.

— Jeff Daniel Marion

Jeff Daniel Marion teaches at Carson-Newman College, Jefferson, Tenn. He is poet-in-residence and director of the Appalachian Center. His most recent work is Boundaries, *an Iris Press audiotape of Marion reading his own poetry.*

The Holy Season: Walking in the Wild
by Albert Stewart
Berea College Press
Berea, Ky. - 1993
$14.00 (hardcover)

In his foreword to *The Holy Season: Walking in the Wild,* former *Appalachian Heritage* editor Albert Stewart describes his second offering of poetry as "the result of long interest and slow ripening — the sacramental view of one long consideration though not necessarily Christian." He explains that he is on intimate terms with holiness as a poetic theme; it is one he began using as early as 1941.

The collection's opening poem, "The Holy Season," provides not only the collection's title but also grounds the poems that follow. The poem begins:

There is a wild track out there on the land
Pressed down in the night while I slept
Or dreamed fitfully of lost kingdoms.

I do not know the maker of the track,
But from long study I know the kind —
Bear or bobcat, mink or mouse, or hoppity toad —
I guess it was one of my animal neighbors
I stand vigil for but only seldom see.

Even without the word *holy* in the title, the poem's diction — lost kingdoms, the maker, standing vigil — evokes contemplation and a religious journey. But the maker here is not God in the abstract. It is instead nature (God in the specific?). The person standing vigil in this poem has kept his watch so carefully that he can distinguish even the track of a mouse.

Many other poems within the collection are rooted deeply both in painstaking and loving description of the natural world and in an uncommon understanding and joy. One of the many poems full of quiet honesty and touching metaphor is "Deptford Pinks." These small wildflowers which the poet contemplates are ones that "grow well along the old fence rows / and in the artful raggedness of abandoned fields." Although they are now naturalized, their ancestors once emigrated to this place just as Stewart's did. "I too came from a far country and maintain / a measure of wildness," he observes.

Stewart's carefully chosen words are full of wisdom and exhibit a mountain-stream clarity, characteristics sadly lacking in much contemporary poetry. Stewart has something to reveal about commonplace things and experiences; he creates epiphanies for his readers. *This* is poetry.

But there is much more than poetic virtuosity in this book; Stewart shares his vision through other media as well. Included in the book are samples of Stewart's photography as well as his sculptures and other pieces of " small art work," all created from objects found during his walks in the wild: "leaf skeletons, tree bark, weathered forms." Thus, he mounts a leaf decayed down to its latticework of veins on a background of pastel colored stripes of blue and cream, green and yellow, and it becomes the "Design of the Wild."

Bennie Moore, courtesy of Albert Stewart

Albert Stewart's "In the High Andes."

Another example of Stewart's "inscrutable hieroglyphics" are the many epigraphs he places throughout the book, affording various views of humanity, the earth, creation. Stewart maintains that they are not to be understood as hard-and-fast interpretations but, like the photographs, "as another form of *light."* It pleases me that these idiosyncratic inclusions help Stewart fashion the book he wanted to give us, for his vision cannot be limited to only one medium.

The final stanzas of "The Holy Season" perhaps explain why this book exists at all:

Night or day
I have been privileged to look into the eyes of holy fire,
Indifferent and persistent as time,
Lovely and evanescent as frost rime on the willow.

The hunter does not know where the track is,
But I, walker in the wild, seeker and sayer, know.
The message is too marvelous to keep.
Who should I tell? Who should I show?
It could be you

Like the mariner, I am looking
For the one to whom it must be told.

— Rebecca Bailey

Rebecca Bailey is a publications editor at Morehead State University, Morehead, Ky.

The Truest Pleasure
by Robert Morgan
Algonquin Books
Chapel Hill, N.C. - 1995
$18.95 (hardcover)

Robert Morgan's latest novel, *The Truest Pleasure,* is a beguiling depiction of Ginny Peace and her family living in North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains at the turn of the century. Morgan captures Southern mountain idiosyncrasy at its best as he explores rural characters and their deeply philosophical outlook on everyday happenings.

Told from Ginny Peace's point of

view, the novel is a story of a married couple who have their differences. Ginny and Tom Peace are honest, hardworking, folks who love each other but disagree on religion, money, and childrearing.

"I reckon I read too much," Ginny says, and it is clear early on that we have quite the thinker on our hands. Morgan has created a narrator with the gift of insight and the ability to articulate it. A gawky girl born into a family of talkers (including her stuttering brother), Ginny is used to having her say, and she is generous with her observations. At times, she steps back from her narrative and gets right to the heart of a scene; for example, when she discusses a particularly heated argument with her husband, she observes that "anger is among the sweetest feelings people know. That's why they cherish it and feed it and remember it so long. Anger is like a tightening and sharpening of sight. It is the brightest angle from which to look at things."

Ginny's wisdom at first seems remarkable in light of her isolation. She does not go to town for years at a time, and the society in which she lives consists of only a handful of people. Though I found such isolation fascinating, in truth it does not really matter. We do not need to know the time period or the setting to understand Ginny and Tom's problems.

Ginny puts her finger on the root cause of their difficulties when she notes, "Those we know best, we know the least. They are so close, we can't see them. I feel married to a foreign being, and I don't know what he means or wants. I don't know what we have to tie us together. Sometimes I can't remember why I married him."

The tragedy is that Ginny is unable to tell Tom what she tells us, and this lack of understanding keeps them apart. The two vacillate between times of passionate connection and periods of virtual noncommunication. It takes a life-threatening crisis to make Ginny realize that her truest pleasure is her love for her husband.

Morgan renders this fine love story through a female narrator. He is not, of course, the first male author to do so, but Morgan's is an amazingly sensitive and perspicacious depiction of this woman's life. He covers menstruation and childbirth — and even tackles lovemaking from a woman's point-of-view.

The Peaces are as religious a family as you are going to meet in contemporary fiction. Morgan gives detailed descriptions of backwoods church revivals and meetings, where people speak in tongues and roll on the floor. Ginny and her father are regulars at these services. Though the family in general is evenly split between this old-time religion and a more modern version, a disagreement that began with Ginny's father and mother a generation before, Ginny and Tom have particularly intense struggles with religious differences.

There is a respectful tone in Morgan's treatment of Ginny's religion, though this treatment certainly cannot be mistaken for an endorsement by the novelist. Throughout the novel, Morgan does a good job of demonstrating how complex such a belief system can be.

Though religion is always in the foreground, it is the curious connection Ginny and her kin have to their land that is the driving force of the novel. Ginny derives her identity, her sanity, her philosophy of life from the land around her. A native of Western North Carolina, Morgan knows firsthand how those in the region are attached to the mountains, and the lure of the landscape is always underpinning the novel's drama. If differing attitudes toward religion threaten the bond between Ginny and Tom, it is their love for the land that brings them together.

A rich mountain heritage and a distinctly Southern way of seeing the world make this novel sing with warmth and sincerity. Lest Morgan be labeled "regional," a label that few writers seem to aspire to these days, I will say that his characters transcend their setting. They are powerfully drawn, and we care about them, not because they are from the Southern Appalachians but because they are wise and thoughtful and we understand their pain.

— Laura Dover

Laura Dover is an assistant editor at Altamont Press in Asheville, N.C. She is also a freelancer and editor.

Books Worth Mentioning

The Airwaves of Zion: Radio and Religion in Appalachia by Howard Dorgan (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1993; $18.95 paper, $34.00 hardcover). Winner of the Western North Carolina Historical Association's 1993 Thomas Wolfe Literary Award, communication professor Howard Dorgan's groundbreaking study of radio evangelism and evangelists is his most recent work, following *Old Regular Baptists of Central Appalachia* and *Giving Glory to God in Appalachia,* all published by the University of Tennessee Press.

Death and Dying in Central Appalachia: Changing Attitudes and Practices by James K. Crissman (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1994; $13.95 paper, $39.95 hardcover). Sociologist James K. Crissman relies on personal experience, literature, and interviews with over 400 mountain people to document Appalachian funeral rituals and burial customs — from neighborly support, food, and music to grave markers and Decoration Days.

Religion in Antebellum Kentucky by John B. Boles (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1975, reprint 1995; $9.95 paper). Reissued in paper, with a new preface by John B. Boles, the *Journal of Southern History's* managing editor, this book focuses primarily on Protestant denominations from the time of the Great Revival (1800-1805), with chapters devoted also to Catholicism and the religious expressions of slaves.

What Tom Sawyer Learned from Dying by Sidney Saylor Farr (Norfolk, Va.: Hampton Roads, 1993; $11.95 paper). *Appalachian Heritage* editor Sidney Saylor Farr explores the spiritual life of a former Olympic athlete whose near-death experience in 1978 resulted in episodes of precognition and revelation.

— Sandra L. Ballard

Book review editor Sandy Ballard is associate professor of English at Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tenn.

Ralph Stanley

The late Jerry Garcia of Grateful Dead fame once described him as the "most perfect singer alive."

Ralph Stanley, a legendary figure in bluegrass music, celebrates 50 years as a professional entertainer in 1996. First with his brother Carter and later as a band leader on his own, Stanley has forged a reputation as the master of soulful, haunting, bluesy mountain singing.

His singing style was greatly influenced by the McClure Primitive Baptist Universalist Church which the young Stanley attended in rural Dickenson County, Va. Characteristics of this style include a cappella arrangements, usually due to a prohibition on playing instruments in church, and the "leading" of lines, patterned after the practice of having the pastor first intone each line which is then sung by the congregation — a Scotch-Irish tradition. Stanley is also known for his intense, emotion-filled delivery. Although it is reminiscent of inflections common in traditional African American styles, his delivery apparently developed independently, without direct African American influence.

"Village Church Yard" is a hymn from Stanley's youth, one which he recorded in 1971, virtually inaugurating the tradition of a cappella hymns in bluegrass music. "I always liked 'Village Church Yard' and always wanted to record it the way I heard it in church when I was a boy," says Stanley. "It's really true to life. Everybody experiences the words to that song."

— Tim Stafford

Vicki Rozema

Foggy morning at Primitive Baptist Church, Cades Cove, Tenn.

Village Church Yard

Very slow, without rhythmic pulse; mournful

Tenor: 1. In that dear old vil - lage church - yard

Melody (Leader): 1. In that dear old vil - lage church - yard

Bar./Bass

Lined out by leader: I can see a moss - y mound.

I can see a moss - y mound. I can see a moss - y mound.

There's where my poor moth - er's sleep - in'

There's where my poor moth - er's sleep - in'. There's where my poor moth - er's sleep - in'

In the cold and si - lent ground.

In the cold and si - lent ground. In the cold and si - lent ground.

2. I was young but I remember
Well the night my mother died.
There I saw her spirit fadin'
When she called me to her side.

3. Sayin' "Darlin', I must leave you.
Angels' voices guide you on.
Pray that we may meet in heaven
When your mother's dead and gone."

4. Oft I wander to the graveyard
Flowers to plant with tender care
On the grave of my dear mother
Darkness finds me weepin' there.

5. Lookin' at the stars above me,
Waitin' for an early dawn.
There by Mother I'll be buried
And no more be left alone.

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The Preacher is Called to Testify for the Accused

Before a just Lord raised this world's foundations,
centered the sun, speckled the heavens with stars,
before He dredged the land out of the water,
molded Adam's limbs from dust and spit,
God knew the time would come when Isaac Hampton
would drink too much one night but not before
he won in a poker game no bills or coins,
no ring or saddle but an owlshead pistol
he didn't want or need. Collateral
was all it was, was all it *seemed* to be.
And though he'd won no money he'd lost none,
though down to his last dime when Jacob Lunsford
dealt him two straight aces and Isaac won
his drinking money back, the owlshead pistol.
Those cards were stacked but not by Jacob Lunsford.
So Isaac Hampton bought the moonshine whiskey
he thought to carry home but ended up
drinking with his best friend Ezra Whitfield
on the riverbank in late November
because no cold wind sent them home, no rain
fell from heaven until the morning came.
These are facts. They cannot be disputed.
We've all heard the sheriff's testimony.
The night was "strangely warm," his words, not mine.
And why was Ezra on that riverbank,
a man not much for drink except this night?
His Brahma bull had died that afternoon.
As surely as He led us to this courtroom,
God had led that bull up to the springhouse
to gorge itself on laurel that would kill it
not three days before or three days after
November nineteenth, 1923.
That's why Ezra walked out of that hollow
on Sunday night when any other Sunday
he'd be in church, not off to town to try
and drink away the pain, the memory
of two months' sweat he'd left in another's field
to pay for what he'd dragged into the woods.
And though there were two paths he could have taken
he took the one that followed Middlefork
although the other path was better worn,
had fewer roots to trip on in the dark.
God brought Ezra Whitfield down that trail,
brought Isaac up from town, the moonshine whiskey
waiting to be drunk, the owlshead pistol
crouching like a panther in his pocket.
Isaac almost home. In five more minutes
he'd have left the river trail and followed
the creek up Dismal Mountain. That did not happen.
For they had crossed God's path. We know the rest,
or think we know, the drunken argument,
the grievous wound, the water in the lungs.
We know no more than water spiders know
the depths of pools they skate across. Like them
we live upon the surface. Things occur
we have no inkling of. All we can know
is God's watch measured Ezra Whitfield's time
so Isaac Hampton's crime was our Lord's will,
which is no crime unless our pride would judge
the apple's fall, the barn owl's dark, clawed sight,
the weasel's fierce appetite, this son
I fathered so our Father's will might raise
a rusty owlshead pistol to the chest
of Ezra Whitfield, Isaac's closest friend.
Judge me as well. I have my role in this.
Had I not lain with his mother years ago,
we'd not be here now. Men called it sin
to lie with her but it was God's design
that we should bring this child into the world,
so judge as well the ones who begot me,
take it back a hundred generations,
all the way to He who begot Adam.
For there is where it ends, where it begins.
We must believe in Providence and see
good where only evil seems to be.
If Judas had not kissed our Savior's cheek
Christ would not have died on Calvary,
redeemed us with His blood. No earthly man
did a greater good. It's my belief
that Judas walks the golden paths of heaven.
These words I speak, they too are preordained
to sway or not to sway. If my son hangs
he dies like Judas died but unlike Judas
not by his own hand, condemned like Christ
by men who thought their actions justified.

— Ron Rash

Ron Rash has established family roots in the North Carolina mountains going back to the 1700s. Currently living in Pendleton S.C., Rash has recently been published in New England Review *and* Southern Review. *He won a National Endowment for the Arts Poetry Fellowship in 1994.*

East Tennessee State University is one of 46 institutions in the Tennessee Board of Regents system, the seventh largest system of higher education in the nation. The Tennessee Board of Regents is the governing board for this system which is comprised of six universities, 14 community colleges, and 26 area technology centers. The TBR system enrolls 80 percent of all Tennessee students attending public institutions of higher education.

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A Sunday Service

The infant son of Tracy Good takes his place among the members of the congregation of The Greater Love Church of God in Christ Pentecostal Holiness Church in Johnson City, Tenn. More of Gediyon Kifle's photographs are featured on page 25 of this issue.

Gediyon Kifle

NOW & THEN

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